

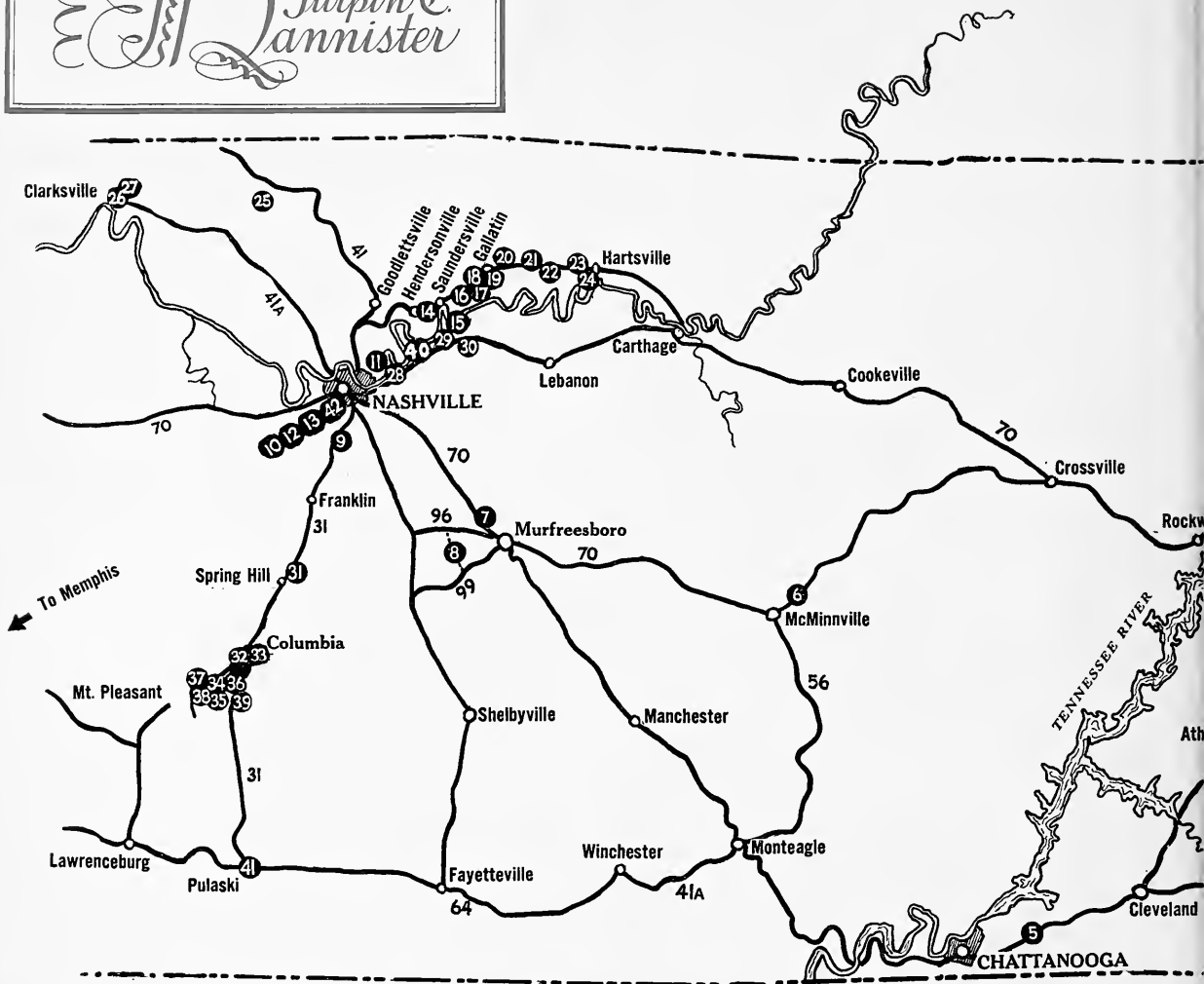
# GRANDEUR IN TENNESSEE

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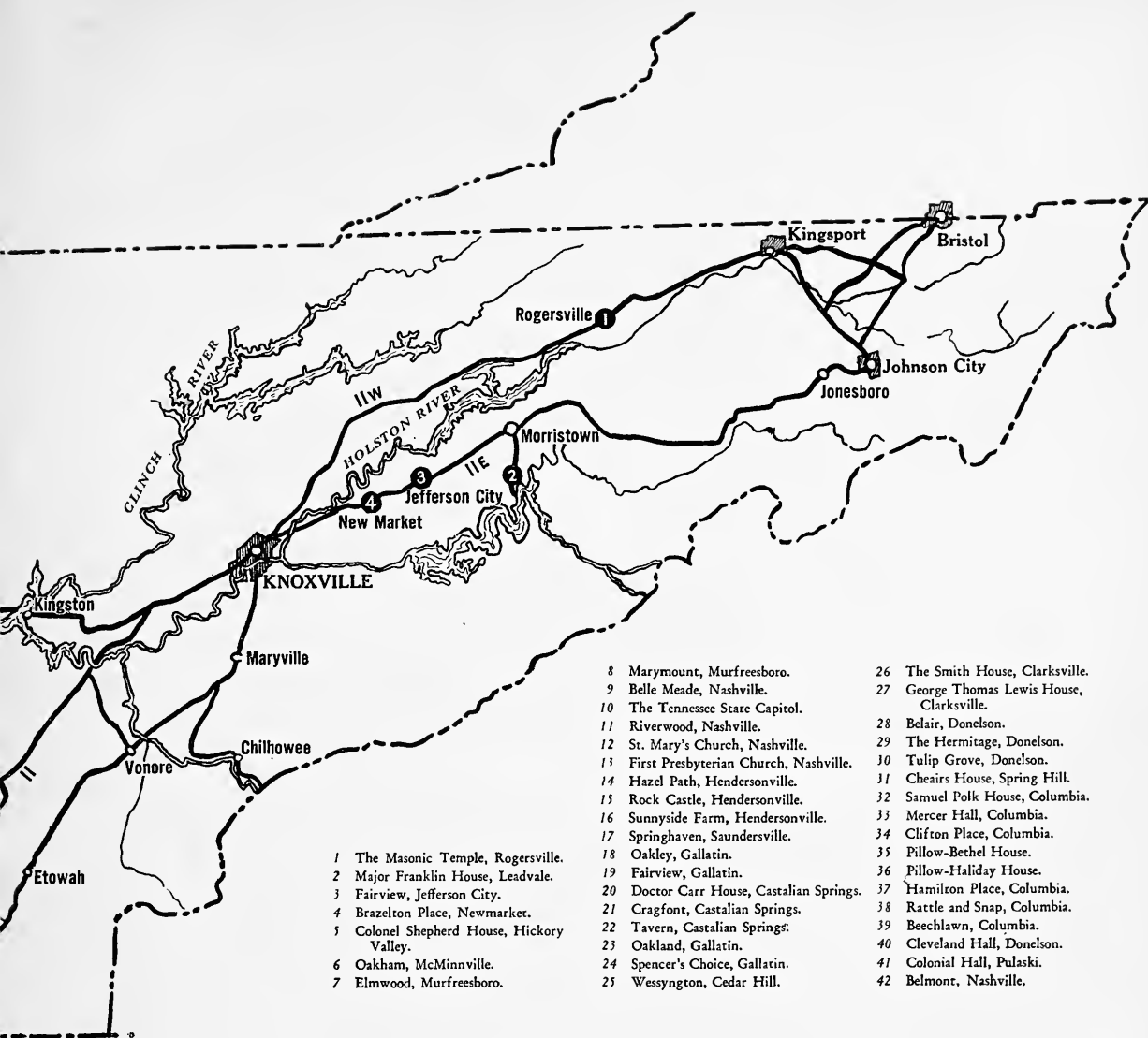
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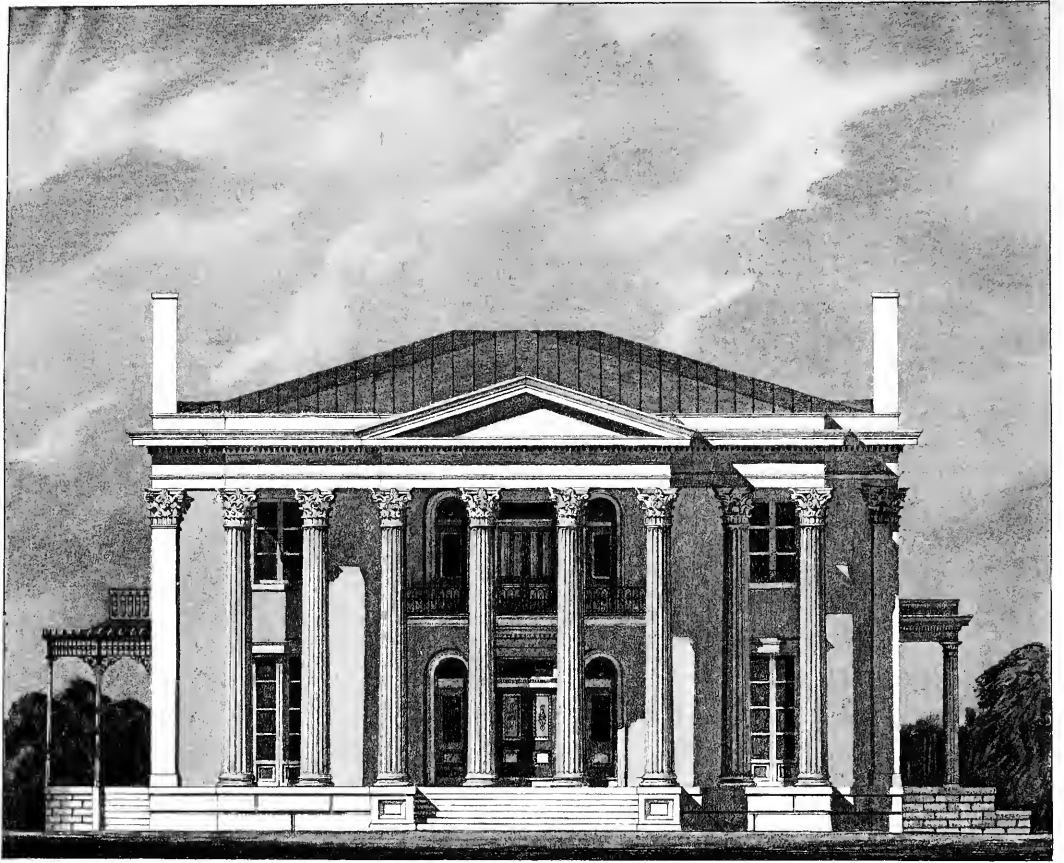
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## GRANDEUR IN TENNESSEE



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# GRANDEUR IN TENNESSEE

*CLASSICAL REVIVAL ARCHITECTURE IN A PIONEER STATE*

*by* GIFFORD A. COCHRAN

*in collaboration with* F. BURRALL HOFFMAN



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## FOREWORD

THE PURPOSE of this volume is in no sense to catalogue all of the early houses of Tennessee. Rather it is an effort to describe the development of architectural style in that state from circa 1780 to 1860. For this reason only those examples have been chosen which seemed to the author most illustrative of this development. There are many houses existing of sufficient quality to deserve inclusion which, for various reasons, will not be found in this book. Some of the reasons are as follows: the lushness of landscape planting near a house sometimes rendered a satisfactory photograph impossible; some houses have had subsequent important additions and changes made to them which, though they do not necessarily destroy the beauty of the original houses, cause them to be unsuitable for the purpose of this volume. These omissions are regrettable but necessary.

The buildings have been arranged as closely as possible in chronological order with the possible exception of the work of William Strickland which it was thought advisable to place in one group. As frequently as possible photographs of elevations have been arranged to face measured drawings of the same elevation so that both can be seen at a glance.

Though it may seem unusual to include photographs and drawings of some houses that no longer exist, it is felt that these merited inclusion on the basis of their architectural interest and that any history of Tennessee architecture would be incomplete without them.

G.A.C.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**A**CKNOWLEDGMENT is hereby gratefully made to those to whom I am indebted for their aid and inspiration in the preparation of this book: *Mrs. Roberta Seawall Brandau, Mrs. John Branham, Mrs. Brainerd Chaney, Mrs. Percy Lockett, Mr. and Mrs. Bolton McBride, Mrs. John Trotwood Moore, Mr. William P. Ridley, Miss Mary Ridley, Mr. J. Fraser Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Starr, Professor and Mrs. Curtis Walker, Mrs. William H. Wemyss*; and to the owners of the houses illustrated in this volume whose kind permission to photograph their houses made this work possible. Above all, grateful thanks are due to *Mr. Harold Sterner* for his untiring help and advice in the preparation of this book.

GIFFORD A. COCHRAN



## PREFACE

THIS is a book about Tennessee Architecture, its beginning and its growth into an interesting and striking regional style. The generous dimensions which distinguish this style, its vigor of execution, and the skillful arrangements and planning compensate adequately for any departure from the finish and, above all, the refinement of interior detail that characterised the great Georgian houses of Tidewater Virginia and the Carolinas, its spiritual forebears. On the whole, the Tennessee houses of the last part of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries need apologize to no one; they can hold their own with the best. Three examples, *Belle Meade*, *Belmont*, and *Rattle and Snap*, are certainly as fine as anything of the period that can be found in the United States and belong among the few truly great houses.

The entire history of the evolution of this section from a pioneer community to one with a high degree of culture, can be fitted into a period of approximately eighty years; from 1780, when the settlement of Tennessee was properly under way and the city of Nashville was founded, until 1860, the outbreak of the Civil War. That crucial struggle put an end to all building for a time, and terminated the system of agriculture based on slave-owning, which had so amply nourished the growth of the Tennessee style and which was the source of the wealth of all the New South. The zenith years were certainly the forties and fifties of the last century when the finest and richest of all Tennessee houses were built and when William Strickland, who had moved from Philadelphia to Nashville in 1844, was designing some of his most important buildings. In this period, the greatest agricultural and professional families were apparently competing with one another to determine who could build the best houses. The Polk and Pillow families, to name only two out of many, were notable in this respect. The result of this competition was that these great families left behind them a solid testimony of skill and taste. With the Civil War, the continuity was broken and when building was resumed after the cessation of hostilities, the styles that emerged showed none of the fitness and skill that featured the ante-bellum architecture. A sort of architectural dark age seemed to have descended on the United States, and inspiration to have fled for a time from the South, as elsewhere.

However, of any rich and productive period, something always remains for later generations to study and appreciate. Ante-Bellum Tennessee is no exception. In fact, the state is particularly fortunate in this respect. Though numerous and bitter battles were fought on Tennessee soil, the four years of war proved less destructive there than in many other places. A high proportion of her architectural treasure remains standing today in various states of preservation. Time and neglect have been more devastating than war, and if the reader is occasionally surprised that some of the photographs in this volume are of buildings in a more

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or less extreme state of dilapidation, it is hoped that he will discern under the ruined surface, the true architectural excellence that remains.

Who were the men who built this culture out of the wilderness and produced an architectural style on the grand scale in such a brief span of time? Aside from their other achievements, they added a rich contribution to American architecture and left their followers a valuable heritage. It may be worthwhile to review their history briefly and to examine their backgrounds and the conditions under which they thrived and accumulated the wealth that is a prerequisite to the development of any truly fine architecture.

### EARLY HISTORY OF TENNESSEE

#### *Conflicting Claims*

FOR GENERATIONS before the coming of the white men, that region which is now Tennessee, by virtue of its wealth of game, had remained the favorite hunting grounds of various Indian tribes.

The first white men to appear on this primitive scene were De Soto and his followers who came through the region in 1540 on their eternal hunt for gold. There was nothing to make them tarry since gold was nowhere to be found in the wilderness. Nevertheless, since De Soto had actually trod its soil, the Spanish crown laid claim to the territory as a part of its Florida domain.

A century and more passed before the next white men disturbed the tranquillity of the Indians. Pere Marquette in 1673 and La Salle in 1682 in their explorations down the Mississippi River passed through what is now the State of Tennessee. La Salle left his mark for a time in the shape of Fort Prudhomme, near the present site of the city of Memphis, but it soon returned to the wilderness. Nevertheless, French fur traders came in their wake and continued to operate along the Mississippi. This was sufficient grounds for France, also, to put forth a claim to the area as a part of her territory of Louisiana.

Not until the early 1700s did the English crown show an interest in the land west of the Alleghenies. Then it also laid claim, perhaps more validly than France or Spain, maintaining that what is now Tennessee constituted the western part of the Virginia and Carolina grants which, at the time they were made, extended indefinitely westward into terra incognita. England's claim was further reinforced by the fact that a small number of white fur-traders from the seaboard colonies had been steadily moving into the territory, trading and living with the indigenous Indian tribes, sometimes even marrying their women.

The operations of the French traders, originally active only along the Mississippi, were by this time bringing them farther east, and constituted a possible threat to the English traders in the Cherokee country. It became obvious to the English that in order to consolidate their position, the friendship of the Cherokee tribes should be cemented at all costs. Accordingly, in 1730, Sir Alexander Cuming made a personal visit to the Cherokee tribes, whose domain

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comprised nearly all that is now East Tennessee, and succeeded in persuading them to swear allegiance to the English crown. This was a master stroke of diplomacy. The friendship of the Cherokees, despite occasional lapses when they massacred English garrisons and settlements, could now be counted on the side of the English in case of trouble with the French.

The French meanwhile were less diplomatic in their handling of the Indians. In an effort to gain complete control of the passage of the Mississippi and to isolate the English to the east, they became involved in hostilities with the Chickasaw Indians who had their lands along the river. They were never able either to vanquish these warlike Indians or obtain their friendship. Two military expeditions under the *Sieur de Bienville* from Illinois and the *Marquis de Vaudreuil* from New Orleans, intended to make the region safe for Frenchmen, moved to the region but both were forced to withdraw by the Chickasaw Indians and their allies, the English traders.

When France and England declared war in 1754, hostilities immediately spread to the colonies. With the British victory and the signing of the Peace of Paris, France agreed to relinquish all her claims east of the Mississippi and Spain abandoned her East Florida domain in favor of Great Britain. The huge region between the Appalachians and the Mississippi was now firmly part of the English colonies and ripe for settlement and exploitation.

## FIRST PERMANENT SETTLEMENTS

**D**URING THE course of the French and Indian War, the Overhill Cherokees, who were technically allied to the English crown and who feared for their safety at the hands of the French, petitioned the colonial governments of Virginia and South Carolina to aid them by building and manning a fort in their territory. The two governments, either unable to cooperate or as a matter of rivalry, decided each to build a fort of its own. The Virginia expedition, first on the scene, built a fort at Chota, the Cherokee capital not far from the present site of Knoxville, but since it was never garrisoned it played no part in the settlement of Tennessee. However, the South Carolina expedition under the command of Captain Paul Denmore completed and garrisoned its fort, naming it Fort Loudoun in honor of John Campbell, Earl of Loudoun, then commanding the British forces in America. Its site on the Little Tennessee River, between Vonore and Chilhowee, is some fifteen miles west of the North Carolina line.

No sooner was Fort Loudoun completed than a number of settlers, farmers, artisans and their wives and children, moved into the area of its relatively modest protection and made their homes there. It was an ill-fated move as in 1760 the Cherokees, forgetting or rejecting their allegiance to the British crown, seized the fort, and put the garrison, the settlers and their families to death. Nevertheless, Fort Loudoun can be rightly considered the first permanent settlement in Tennessee, if only in intention.

In spite of the war, interest in the unknown territory did not diminish. This was the hey-

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day of the early land speculators who dealt in huge tracts of virgin wilderness, usually from a distance. On the acquisition of such a tract or even before, the new owner would dispatch his explorers into the region to explore and map his purchase or prospective purchase, with a view to locating likely sites for permanent settlements. Among these scouts, also known as "long hunters" (no doubt due to the length of time they stayed away from home on their hunting expeditions), are some of the most famous names in early Tennessee history; Daniel Boone, David Crockett, John Sevier and many others. Most of them, at one time or another, worked for that remarkable man, Richard Henderson of North Carolina, who had a way of buying land by the millions of acres.

From 1760 on, the number of these long hunters greatly increased and their explorations led them ever deeper into the new territory. The Cumberland Gap had been discovered earlier and was the favorite route for crossing the mountains, and it was not long before the long hunters were familiar with what is now Middle Tennessee.

### *The Watauga Settlements*

In 1769 one William Bean arrived on the banks of Boone's Creek, near the Watauga River in Eastern Tennessee, and there built himself a cabin. He was soon joined by several other families from his native state, North Carolina. More settlers came to the site and neighboring colonies grew up at Carter's River Valley and on the Nollichucky River. Since the time of the massacre of the ill-starred Fort Loudoun community, these tiny settlements were the first to take actual root in the soil of the new territory and to become, in the strict sense of the word, permanent settlements. They soon adopted the name of the Watauga Settlements.

However, their situation must have been extremely perilous, surrounded as they were and greatly outnumbered by Indian tribes who had frequently shown themselves hostile in the past and might become so again at any time. No doubt they also felt themselves to be of small concern to the government of distant North Carolina of which they were, if only nominally, a part. In any case, as a matter of self protection and in order to assure some form of local government, they set up what was known as the Watauga Association and wrote a constitution by which they could govern themselves. This is believed to be the first constitution written on American soil.

Although possessed of a governing body and a set of written laws, the Watauga settlers still lacked proper title to the land on which they lived. Legally, it belonged to the Cherokee Nation. This legal technicality was overcome in 1775 when Richard Henderson's Transylvania Land Company, which always spurned small figures, bought 20,000,000 acres from the Cherokees, and immediately resold the site of the Watauga settlements to its founders, thereby regularizing their position.

The next year saw the outbreak of the American War of Independence and with the commencement of hostilities, the settlers were again forcibly reminded of their exposed position. Isolated from their fellow colonists on the seaboard by hundreds of miles and a rough moun-



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tain barrier, they were as vulnerable as ever to attacks by the Indians, who were unlikely to remain friendly. A petition for annexation was therefore dispatched to the North Carolina legislature in order to make that state take some of the responsibility for their defense. North Carolina immediately granted the petition for annexation and the Watauga settlements became a military district, known as Washington District in honor of the Commander-in-Chief. Later it became Washington County and Jonesboro was selected as the county capital.

This second war did not deter settlers from moving into the new land any more than had the first. On the contrary, it proved rather a stimulus to exploration and colonization. The stream of immigration flowed deeper and deeper into the state. Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland Valley were now seeing new faces in quantity and Nashborough, the present city of Nashville, was founded in 1780, several years before hostilities were to end.

With the end of the war, the movement westward over the mountains began in earnest. More and more new land was opened to settlement. Like their predecessors, the newer arrivals found their communities threatened with the possibility of Indian attack on all sides and any help distant and dubious. Consequently, in an effort to make North Carolina (of which they were still a part), take an interest in and assure protection to its offshoot beyond the mountains, they petitioned that state for the "salutary benefits of government." The government of North Carolina, however, was in no way desirous of involving itself in distant and profitless Indian warfare, and got rid of the knotty problem by ceding its Western Territories to the Federal Government. The angry response of the territories was not long in coming. The settlers at once declared themselves independent and a separate state, to be known as the "State of Franklin." All this without benefit of Congress! As a further act of defiance, John Sevier was elected governor.

At length North Carolina relented and repealed its act of cession. But this came too late. The State of Franklin remained adamant and refused to be reattached to its mother state. The next few years were passed as the "Government South of the Holston and French Broad Rivers." (When Sevier's term had expired, no further elections were held and the "State of Franklin" had ceased to exist.) In 1790, Congress created "The Territory of the United States South of the Ohio River." By 1796 the new territory had more than sufficient inhabitants to apply for admission as a state, and accordingly such a petition was sent to Congress. Congress acted rapidly and on June 1st, 1796, the State of Tennessee was added to the Union.

## THE EARLY DAYS

WITH THE end of the Revolution the whole country was on the move. The desire to occupy and settle the new western lands seems to have gripped the Eastern Seaboard from Maine to the Carolinas simultaneously. While enterprising bands of New Englanders were moving across central and western New York via the Mohawk Valley, Pennsylvanians were migrat-

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ing in large numbers over the mountains into land west of the Alleghenies, and the converging streams were pushing on into Ohio and the Western Reserve. Likewise Marylanders, Virginians, and Carolinians, were crossing the mountains further south and pouring into Kentucky and Tennessee.

It was inevitable that these migrants would bring a part of their civilization and background with them. The Northerners from a part of the country that was already well on its way to industrialization were not long in imposing a commercial and industrial character on their new lands. Further south, where the new settlers came from an agrarian civilization based on the slave system, it was to be expected that the plantation form of economy would come along with them. However, these totally different economies did not manifest themselves for a time. The pioneer period had first to be gone through; forests had to be cut down, land cleared, swamps drained and all the other necessities of settling a new country.

It has been widely believed that the men who constituted the new migration were mostly drawn from the unsuccessful and disaffected. This was far from the case. The prospect of new lands appealed to a whole cross-section of the post-colonial population, and if one unsuccessful farmer was tempted to pull up his stakes and hope for better fortune across the mountains, his prosperous plantation-owning neighbor was equally likely to take his fifty or more slaves, his Georgian furniture and his family, put them on wagons and accompany him on the great adventure. Along with them went men of every type and background, professionals, adventurers and artisans; briefly, all those who were willing to take a chance of thriving in the new territory. Furthermore, a large number of soldiers and officers of the Revolutionary Army had received their recompense or accrued pay from a dubiously grateful government in the form of land scrip in the unsettled regions.

The problems of living in a pioneer country were much the same for the rich and the poor. Men were mostly reduced to a common level. The land had to be located, a dwelling built and fields cleared from the virgin forest.

This first dwelling was bound to be simple. There was no time and there were no facilities for indulgence in a taste for fine architecture or grandeur (though this was to come about in an astoundingly short space of time). The early house was usually a simple one-room log cabin. Forest trees, chosen from those which had been felled, were cut into the desired length and rolled to the spot chosen for the homestead. Usually neighbors joined in the common effort and in a week or so the logs had been squared and notched, shingles had been cut and laid, likewise the floor, and the dwelling was called complete. If it was not a thing of beauty, it was practical and adequate to meet the demands of pioneer living. Furthermore, it was likely to have a certain rustic dignity. Twentieth century architects in Tennessee have not infrequently drawn inspiration from these early cabins and have adopted the log structure for entirely modern and sometimes sizable dwellings.

Later on, as the family and the establishment increased, it was proper and practical to consider enlarging the habitation. Because of the difficulty of incorporating an extension to a log cabin construction, it was, as a rule, simpler to build a second similar one-room cabin some

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ten feet distant, and roof over and floor the intervening space. This joining gallery became known as the "dog-trot," or "breezeway," and persisted as a feature of later Tennessee architecture, generally connecting the service wing and the main building.

Since it was simple and easy to build, the log type of construction was not rapidly abandoned even after brick and mortar construction had become practicable. In fact, examples of some importance are to be found, constructed as late as 1828, a date when brick and stone construction had been in use for some time. The so-called Tavern at Castalian Springs was built in that year and it is a building of ample dimensions, which can boast the refinement of some fine mantels. However, as design became more sophisticated, the log cabin gradually disappeared.

## THE REGIONS

### *East Tennessee*

SINCE IT was practically foreordained, given the background of the men who settled the state, that Tennessee would produce an essentially agricultural civilization, any development of its architecture was bound to be influenced by the topography and the soil of its different regions. Let us therefore look at the geography of these regions.

Tennessee is physically divided into three sections with distinctly different characteristics. Between the western slopes of the Appalachian mountains and the Cumberland Plateau lies East Tennessee, the first area to be settled. It is essentially a mountain country with heavy forests and irregular elevations whose only good farmland lies in the narrow river valleys or in small patches. The Tennessee River Valley divides it roughly northeast-southwest. Though the early capitals all lay in East Tennessee, and though it held an early political dominance over the rest of the state, this was entirely due to the fact that it was the first to be settled. When the richer middle region came into its own, political dominance passed there.

The nature of the soil and topography of East Tennessee was obviously unfavorable to the growth of large estates or great landholdings. The good land lay scattered here and there and seldom, if ever, in large tracts. This country tended to become divided into small farms, settled probably by men who had left similar ones to cross the mountains and who were content with modest establishments of their own. It is not surprising, therefore, that with the appearance of the great landlords to the west, an antagonistic attitude toward slavery should have appeared early in East Tennessee.

This is not to say that no houses of architectural importance were built in East Tennessee. Though less numerous than in Middle Tennessee, they are by no means lacking or inferior in quality, as witness, *Fairview* near Jefferson City, *Brazelton Place* at Newmarket, some fine houses near Madisonville and Kingsport as well as in Knoxville. Some extremely interesting examples of architecture in this section today are to be found in the towns of Jonesboro, Rogersville, Elizabethtown and Knoxville, and in other smaller communities.

## GRANDEUR IN TENNESSEE

### *Middle Tennessee*

Though East Tennessee remained the center of population during the territorial days and the days of early statehood, far richer and more promising land lay to the west across the Cumberland Plateau. It was not long before the westward movement to the better land caused Middle Tennessee first to equal and then to outstrip in population the earlier-settled East. The prospective settler, after the grim crossing of the Cumberland Plateau, found himself in a rich and fertile country. In contrast to the eastern part of the state, the valleys were large and wide, the land was long and rolling and rich soil was to be had in abundance. Virgin forest overlaid most of the section, but once cleared, the land was ideally suited to farming.

Large holdings were not long in materializing, and in an amazingly short time the pioneers in Middle Tennessee had adapted themselves to their new surroundings, changed the wilderness into prospering farms and some had even set to work to build themselves homes of a commensurate dignity to what they considered their positions in life. Because it was a country particularly blessed agriculturally, once the forests retreated, farms flourished and grew to such an extent that real wealth began to be accumulated by the larger landholders.

Corn was so easily raised, that before the beginning of the nineteenth century, hogs and corn whiskey had become the principal articles of export. Shortly thereafter a widespread boom in wheat set in, and the Middle Tennessee country, being so readily conducive to wheat growing, was one of the first to profit highly by the boom. It was largely in this way that the basis was laid for the great wealth which was to pyramid up until the period of the Civil War. Large holdings of cotton land in West Tennessee also contributed a great revenue. Schools, colleges and universities were founded in and around Nashville and soon a healthy and vigorous culture had taken root.

With the growing prosperity of Middle Tennessee agriculture, an increasing interest in fine building appeared. The earliest of the great houses around Nashville is the house known as *Rock Castle*, near Gallatin in Sumner County. It was built by General Daniel Smith, a veteran of the Revolution, in 1784, a mere four years after the founding of the city of Nashville. Though not large by later standards, it must have seemed palatial at the time of its construction. General Smith was evidently an amateur of fine building and the possessor of a trained eye for architecture, since *Rock Castle* shows nothing primitive or fumbling in its design. Built of rough ashlar limestone, quarried on the property, it boasts a central doorway framed in a manner which was later to become typical of Tennessee houses, with a two-story, ballustrated porch of two superimposed orders. Only, in the case of *Rock Castle*, instead of columns (which were perhaps difficult to construct at the time), square piers with a taper or entasis were used, culminating in a simple but graceful entablature and pediment. At the roofline is a wooden cornice of extreme delicacy.

*Rock Castle* was soon followed by two other stone houses, also in its immediate neighborhood. At the beginning of the century Colonel David Shelby, like General Smith a

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Revolutionary veteran, built himself a large stone house on a tract of land in Sumner County, not far from Gallatin, known as *Spencer's Choice*.

Simultaneously, another military man, General James Winchester, erected his *Cragfont*, a stone house on the truly grand scale. It is today unfortunately in a lamentable state of disrepair, but it must once have been magnificent.

The interiors of all three of these houses were finished, oddly enough, with rather more elaboration and ornament than was the case in houses built subsequently. They all three possess some good, if simple, panelling and some skillfully carved mantels. This is the more surprising as wood carvers and joiners must have been rare indeed in the pioneer days. The workmen for *Cragfont* are said to have been imported from Baltimore. Perhaps they also contributed to *Spencer's Choice* and *Rock Castle*.

At all events, it is indicative of the strength of the roots of the new civilization and the determination of the men who were founding it to make it thrive, that they were building themselves houses of true grandeur at a time when the Tennessee country was so narrowly removed from the wilderness, and Indian attacks still made frontier life precarious.

### *West Tennessee*

West Tennessee, that section lying between the Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers, was the last region of the state to be settled. This rich bottom land remained essentially an Indian domain until 1818 when it was bought from the tribes by treaty and the city of Memphis laid out. Its tremendous agricultural potential was early seen by such farsighted Middle Tennesseans as Andrew Jackson, John Overton and General Winchester, who acquired large tracts there.

Due to the nature of its soil and topography and its contiguity to the Mississippi, cotton, which was becoming increasingly profitable, inevitably became the almost unique cash crop. Memphis at once became the metropolis of the area and took on the character of a thriving river town. For the duration of the cotton boom, it shared with the other towns on the great river almost half a century of uninterrupted prosperity and growth. So deeply engaged in commerce were the citizens of Memphis that they seem to have taken less interest in architecture than the more leisured and culture-conscious Middle Tennesseans. If they built grandly, there is little evidence of it today. The city has expanded, and so much was torn down in the process, that there is little that remains from before the Civil War.

However, if one is to judge from what is left, fine building was by no means unknown in early Memphis. One outstanding house remains on Beale Street, now crowded in by rather mean dwellings, namely the *Hunt Phelan* house, built in 1835. This very pure example of Greek-Revival would be perfectly at home on the Atlantic Seaboard, and is actually somewhat reminiscent of the Classic-Revival houses in New Haven, Connecticut. Another example of grand building, now unfortunately destroyed, was the *Robertson-Topp* house of which measured drawings fortunately were made and appear in this volume.

## GRANDEUR IN TENNESSEE

The hinterland of West Tennessee, though it was rapidly divided into huge holdings and poured a steady stream of gold into the Memphis coffers (enriching also some of the absentee landlords in Middle Tennessee), somehow never produced the luxurious growth of graceful and elegant houses which appeared in great numbers in the central part of the state. No doubt this was largely due to the fact that the owners mostly lived elsewhere, either in the urban agglomeration of Memphis or in the communities around Nashville, farming the western lands by means of large gangs of slave labor and their overseers.

One searches in vain for the equivalent of *Belle Meade*, *Belmont*, *Rattle and Snap*, or any of the other great houses that are to be found in such profusion within a radius of fifty miles of Nashville. In La Grange, to be sure, are two houses of architectural interest, the *General Mitchie* house and the *Pulliam* house, and there are others in Brownsville, Jackson, Bolivar, as well as other towns. It is regrettable that there are so few examples from West Tennessee illustrated in this volume, but by far the largest number of houses of true grandeur are found in Middle Tennessee and the proportion is inevitably reflected.

## ARCHITECTURAL STYLE IN TENNESSEE

### *Pre-Greek Revival*

IT MIGHT have been expected that when real architectural style gradually replaced simple pioneer log cabin construction, and life began to take on some of the amenities of the more advanced seaboard communities, that a contemporary style would have been adopted. This was, however, not the case. East of the mountains, the so-called Federal Style, a somewhat attenuated and Adam-like version of the late Georgian, had become generally the rule. To the west the early designers for some reason (perhaps they had access only to the earlier Georgian handbooks on architecture), went back half a century to the early and middle Georgian periods. Paradoxically, the only examples of the Federal Style to be found in Tennessee are the interiors and mantels of the three earliest great houses namely, *Rock Castle*, *Spencer's Choice*, and *Cragfont*. This lends further substance to the belief that the workmen for these houses came from Baltimore, where no doubt they had acquired the more modern style. In later houses we fail entirely to see this "Federal" handling of the Georgian, with its almost over-delicate and elaborate treatment of detail, and the deduction can be made that the practice of importing workmen from the east was discontinued in favor of teaching one's slaves to handle the construction and ornamentation.

Be that as it may, the builders of Tennessee clung fanatically to the Georgian or Colonial style long after it had ceased to be dominant in the rest of the country. Even when the Greek Revival had almost universally replaced the earlier Colonial, the Tennesseans held

## GRANDEUR IN TENNESSEE

on to their Georgian framework and reluctantly used the Greek orders and detail often merely as ornament on an otherwise purely Georgian building. There are remarkably few examples of houses built exclusively in the idiom of the Greek Revival and these came late, in the 1850's for the most part, although the *Hunt Phelan* house in Memphis is an exception, having been erected in 1835.

This time lag sometimes gives the student of architecture some queer surprises. *Fairview*, for instance, one of the great houses near Gallatin, built by Major Isaac Franklin, gives the appearance of having been built circa 1760 (an obvious impossibility). Actually, this almost purely Georgian house was built in 1832. The same is true of *Hamilton Place*, one of the Polk houses near Columbia. *Wessyngton*, near Cedar Hill, a pure Georgian house, was built in 1819.

Tennessee architecture was not long, moreover, in taking on characteristics and acquiring modifications peculiarly its own, and its designers did not hesitate to take liberties with the usual proportions of Georgian building. For instance: since Tennessee's summers are hot and its winters mild and short, ceilings had a tendency to get higher and higher (the *Pillow-Holiday* house has room heights of 16 feet). With the heightening of the ceilings, windows also grew higher, giving them narrower proportions. Sometimes, when the house was only one room deep, as *Brazelton Place* or *Rock Castle*, it took on an aspect of accentuated narrowness. Talbot Hamlin in *Greek Revival Architecture in America*, characterizes Tennessee architecture as having "long, narrow, high proportions with a roof of medium slope."

The mildness of the climate permitted much outdoor living and this removed the necessity of walling communications between rooms. Thus, at a very early date, we see open galleries serving as connecting halls for upstairs rooms. Since the usual plan of the Tennessee house, a plan which persists to this day, was a T, or an L, with the service quarters forming the stem of the T or the wing of the L, it became almost the rule to surround these quarters with Charleston-like verandahs, joining them to the main block of the house by means of the open "dog-trot" previously referred to.

As Middle Tennessee early showed itself to be an ideal land for wealthy planters, it continued to attract new people from the Atlantic states. Families of culture and wealth arrived in increasing numbers bringing their slaves and retinues, amongst whom were artisans. With them, they brought also new architectural ideas. Since clay for brick-making was at hand in abundance and slaves were available to bake it, brick rapidly replaced cut stone as a building material. In fact, after *Cragfont*, *Rock Castle*, and *Spencer's Choice* were completed in the first years of the nineteenth century, all built of rough ashlar and all lying in the same general neighborhood, stone houses ceased to be built and brick became the rule, with limestone used for steps, lintels, porch floors and bases of columns. In the case of more modest houses, clapboard was generally used.

The local clay produced brick strikingly similar to that of Virginia, of a handsome salmon shade. It was generally laid in Flemish Bond but this was by no means universal.

## GRANDEUR IN TENNESSEE

Local limestone, used almost entirely wherever stone was called for, came from the neighboring quarries. More colorful than Indiana limestone, it has weathered beautifully over the years.

A large proportion of these houses stand in handsome parks, planted with hickory, tulip trees, elms and cedars, among other varieties. These trees have now attained their maturity and the pinnacle of their beauty. Perhaps in no other place in America can one find parks which could favorably be compared with their prototypes in England. Tennessee is an exception. For instance, *Tulip Grove* at Donelson and the *Cheairs House* in Spring Hill, stand in tree-shaded grounds of which any great English manor could be proud.

As for gardens, few now remain. We know that once they were of considerable elaboration and on a grand scale, maintained by numerous slaves. However, necessity, after the Civil War, must have compelled the gradual abandonment of these no doubt once magnificent gardens. In *History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee*, there are numerous sketches which give us an inkling of what they must once have been. But today little trace is left except here and there the edging of a brick walk and a few persistent perennial plants.

Not infrequently, outbuildings, in scale with the dwelling and of true architectural quality, stand in the immediate neighborhood of the main house itself. Slave quarters remain in some instances, but frequently have been torn down or abandoned. In the grounds of the *Pillow-Bethel* house and at right angles to it, forming almost a wing, is a brick office which the architect, for some reason, decided to execute in the Gothic style, in strange contrast to the pure classicism of the main building. *Clifton Place* also has a separate brick building originally used as an office with a four-pier wooden porch. Brick smoke houses are invariably a part of the cluster of outbuildings, and to this day hams and bacon are smoked at home. In contrast to the great estates of the Hudson Valley where brick or stone stables and barns are frequently as significant architecturally as the house itself, there are seldom even evidences of corresponding structures in Tennessee.

In the ensuing photographs, since no colors are indicated, it can be assumed that: brick, when not painted, is of the aforementioned salmon shade; trim and cornices, with a very few exceptions, are of wood painted white; wherever stone is used, it is native Tennessee limestone.

### *Greek Revival*

As time went on, the displacement of the Georgian by the Greek style began to manifest itself, and with the introduction and use of the Greek orders and detail the period of real grandeur was at hand. The architects, or designers, of these houses are, for the most part, unknown to us or the records are lost (except in the case of William Strickland). However, one thing is certain, they used their orders with originality, freedom and vigor. Seldom, (except in the case of the State Capitol), did the simon-pure Greek Temple, transformed into dwelling, commercial edifice or church, appear. The Tennesseans retained their stub-



## GRANDEUR IN TENNESSEE

born liking for the fundamentally Georgian, and to this they applied the Greek details and orders, incorporating them with much skill and often with individuality. The earlier two-story porch gave way to the columned portico, windows acquired Greek detail, moldings became bolder in profile. A characteristic form of house was a five or seven bay central block, with either hipped or gabled roof, to which was added, often at a later date, two flanking wings. The kitchen and service quarters persisted, generally, as a projection to the rear. *Hamilton Place* in Columbia and *Belair* near Donelson are good examples of this arrangement. Local variations and peculiarities crop up in certain districts. For instance, only in the area of Columbia does one find segmentary arches at the tops of the windows, a radical departure from Greek Revival precepts. They are seen both at *Beechblawn* and at *Mercer Hall*. It is likely that the same builder-designer had a hand in planning both of these houses and was responsible for introducing this innovation. *Clifton Place* and the *Pillow-Bethel House*, likewise in the general area of Columbia, exhibit the same Ionic Order surmounted by a bold and somewhat heavy pediment and entablature, undoubtedly both the work of one man. These, along with the *Pillow-Holiday House*, also boast an unusual refinement in that the limestone bases for the wooden Ionic columns project upward an extra six inches beyond the moldings and are fluted to receive the flutings of the columns.

By 1840, the great families were competing with one another as to which could build the finest house. The Polk family alone enriched the neighborhood of Columbia with no less than four great houses, and their neighbors, the Pillows, were not far behind. Nashville, too, was building splendid city residences worthy to rank in grandeur with their country cousins. Gallatin, Clarksville, Murfreesboro, Pulaski, Lebanon, Mount Pleasant, Franklin, Spring Hill, to mention only a few towns, not to be outdone, were all producing dwellings on the grand scale and of outstanding merit.

### *Gothic Revival*

In Tennessee, the Gothic Revival of the first half of the 19th Century never enjoyed the popularity that it had in many other states. Georgian and Classic clearly dominated the minds of the early Tennesseans. An exception to this rule is the work of Major Heimann who designed a number of Gothic buildings, including churches in Nashville. He also is responsible for the "Castle Building" of the Austin Peary Normal School in Clarksville. Columbia Institute in Columbia is another institutional building in the romantic idiom. However, modification and modernization have rendered many of the Gothic buildings inappropriate for inclusion in this volume. In other cases the fact that they are undeniably less successful architecturally than their classical counterparts has caused them to be omitted.

### *Interiors*

If one were to criticize in any way the great houses of this period, it might be to observe that they are surprisingly bare of interior detail. There is a rather noticeable lack of orna-

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mental plasterwork and wood carving. The reason for this is probably not hard to find. The slave system was not one to produce a class of skilled artisans, and though slaves could be taught brick-making, masonry, stone cutting, carpentry and the rougher kind of work, such skills as wood carving, plaster-molding, joining, and the making of delicate ornamental ironwork, have traditionally belonged to the independent craftsmen and were usually only practiced after years of apprenticeship. Besides this, the agricultural slave system was not conducive to the establishment of such commercial organizations as planing mills and iron foundries. These were situated, for the most part, north of the Ohio. Furthermore, since land was the criterion of worldly achievement, the successful craftsman who was able to amass a certain sum was likely to abandon his not-too-well paid trade and become a landlord at the first opportunity.

As an illustration, in the early days when ornamental supports were called for, they appeared either in the shape of simple piers as in *Rock Castle*, or when more elaborate, they were hexagonal or octagonal in cross section, surmounted by simple capitals, such as those at *Fairview* in Jefferson City. However, with the arrival of the popularity of the Greek Style, infinitely more complexity of design was necessary, and to obtain fluted columns and Corinthian capitals, builders had to look elsewhere. For instance, at *Rattle and Snap*, the greatest of the Polk houses, ten Corinthian columns with extremely elaborate capitals (of cast iron superimposed on a wood core) ornament the facade of the house. The shafts of these columns are believed to have been manufactured in Cincinnati, where doubtless the details of the capitals were also cast, and transported from there to Columbia by river boat and ox team.

In the case of interior cornices, medallions and even window trim, this would hardly be a practical system and the result was that in most great Tennessee houses of the period, they remained extremely plain and unadorned. This happens not to be true of *Rattle and Snap*, just mentioned, and it is certain that George K. Polk, its builder, imported from elsewhere some highly skilled craftsmen, since his rooms are embellished with cornices and ceiling medallions of rare delicacy and sophistication.

*Belmont*, in Nashville, is another exception. Its interior is almost over-lavishly decorated, though there are indications that the most elaborate parts were added at a later date. Though no actual document has been found which attributes this house to William Strickland, Talbot Hamlin, in *Greek Revival Architecture in America*, states that it is almost certainly by him, and the evidence points to this being true.

## WILLIAM STRICKLAND

ANY STUDY of the development of architectural style in Tennessee which failed to mention the contribution of William Strickland would be very incomplete. This gifted Philadelphian arrived on the scene in 1844, when Tennessee was already showing the growth

of its own distinctive style. Pupil of Latrobe, founder and first president of the American Institution of Architects (later to become the American Institute of Architects), with an already established reputation in Philadelphia, Strickland brought with him the prize-winning designs for the projected State Capitol. Here he was to spend the next ten years of his life, until his death in 1854.

No purpose would be served by discussing the obvious merits of Strickland's design for the Tennessee State Capitol. Plans and photographs are included in this volume. However, one can assess the extent of his contribution to the local style by enumerating a few of the buildings designed by him in and around Nashville, for that was the primary area of his influence. St. Mary's Church, Nashville (now unfortunately modified, so that much of its distinction has been lost); *Belle Meade* and *Belmont* (two of the truly great houses in Tennessee, the latter now integrated with some success into the buildings of Ward Belmont College); the former Davidson County Court House (now destroyed and replaced by a modern building; and lastly, that tour-de-force, the First Presbyterian Church of Nashville. For this last building, on a large plot of land which permitted the use of monumental scale, Strickland chose a surprising and most unlikely style, namely, the Egyptian. What prompted him to this amazing choice is unknown to the author, for among Strickland's papers in the State Library are designs for this Church in the purely classical style. The similarity of the plans to the present building are unmistakable, only the details and ornaments are changed. But what an extraordinary change! Instead of the Ionic order, we find Egyptian columns, Egyptian moldings and all the architectural vocabulary of the Nile. The interior is covered by polychrome wall paintings in bright colors, and on the altar end the architectural scheme continues, viewed between the columns flanking the organ in a "trompe l'œil" perspective. A truly startling frame for the ritual of the Church of Scotland!

It is a matter of taste whether Strickland's change from the Classical to the Egyptian was a happy one. However, the handling of the plan, the structural ingenuity (the short span of the ceiling, hung from a truss, is seventy-five feet without support), and the general effect, show the hand of a consummate artist and craftsman. Perhaps Strickland, long considered a leading exponent of the Greek Revival, merely became bored with the repeated use of the Classical Orders and wished to try his hand at something new—for which he went back several thousand years into antiquity.

That Strickland was instrumental in, or even completely responsible for, the designing of many other houses in the region, is unquestionable. However, though one or two dwellings, notably *Burlington* (now vanished) and *Kingsley*, are attributed to him, they are more in the later Italian bracketed villa style and completely unlike his other work. Possibly they were designed by his son, Francis Strickland, who was also an architect. In any case, their plans are not among the Strickland papers in the State Library, nor for that matter are the plans of *Belle Meade* or *Belmont*, but there is sufficient local evidence to attribute these houses to him.

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Strickland died in 1854 and his body was placed in a vault of the north wall of the State Capitol, which he had incorporated in the design as his final resting place.

### ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS

THIS PART of the introduction should be the most important in the whole text, but it will be lamentably short and quite inadequate. The reason is that any researcher seeking information on the early architects of Tennessee, encounters a void. There are no known records which give any clue to the designers of the vast majority of the houses and any attributions (except in the case of William Strickland) which could be made are in most cases too circumstantial to be of any value historically or architecturally. The present owners of most of the fine Tennessee houses generally aver that the architect was the original owner and builder. Nevertheless, it is almost incredible that even in a period of good taste and general interest in architecture, when many wealthy men were skilled in designing, so many of them in one locality could be sufficiently versed in the art to build themselves dwellings of real merit and architectural distinction. Except for a few examples of naivete here and there and indications of the amateur, seldom does one discover a house of any pretensions in the period 1800-1860, which bears any other stamp than that of the professional.

No, surely there were professional architects active in Tennessee in the first half of the nineteenth century. There are legends of traveling architects who moved through the state, executing commissions as they moved. However, there is unfortunately no record to indicate which homes were built by which designers.

The most likely hypothesis is that no records were kept or the matter was considered of insufficient importance to preserve them for posterity if they ever existed. In any event, it is a genuine loss and makes the study of early architecture in America all the more difficult.

### THREE GREAT HOUSES

#### *Belle Meade*

THREE HOUSES in this volume are treated with especial elaboration and at greater length than the others. It is felt that they represent the very peak of Tennessee architectural achievement and deserve, as such, this greater attention.

*Belle Meade*, the earliest of the three, stands in a handsome park just outside the city limits of Nashville on the Harding Pike. The house was originally built about 1810 by Giles Harding who intended it to grace the finest estate in the South. There are no pictures available of the original building which burned in 1853. However, after the fire, William

## GRANDEUR IN TENNESSEE

Strickland was retained to reconstruct the house, and it stands today, with the exception of a later and rather unfortunate addition, in the shape of a porte cochere on the rear, much as he finally left it.

The walls of the original structure appear to have remained substantially intact as the main block of the house certainly dates from before Strickland's time. However, across the entire front, he built a magnificent portico of eight Ionic piers of Tennessee limestone. Each pier consists of two immense blocks. This portico is crowned by a parapet ornamented with delicate stone finials. The effect of scale and monumentality added by this portico must be seen to be fully appreciated.

The interior, though simple in plan and detail, is as impressive as the exterior. The trim is Greek of an extreme simplicity but of great boldness and scale. The stair, at the head of the hall which bisects the house, is surely by Strickland to judge by its grace.

Unfortunately, many of the original mantels have been removed and replaced by mantels in the quasi-colonial style of the early 1900s. If the original two mantels which were probably of an extreme simplicity had been retained it would have been a tremendously impressive room. Otherwise, every effort has been made by the present owners to keep the interior in harmony with the period of this great house.

### *Rattle and Snap*

*Rattle and Snap*, the second house in point of antiquity of the three, is situated some five miles outside of Columbia, Maury County, on the Mt. Pleasant road. It is built on a slight rise in the land at the end of a quarter mile vista which serves as the front drive. The situation and the effect when first discovered are truly noble.

Since both photographs and plan are shown in this volume a detailed word description is quite unnecessary here. However, plans and photographs do not always convey scale and it might be proper to say that the effect of monumentality of this house is quite unusual in the United States.

It is tragic to have to mention it, but this great example of American architecture is badly in need of repair and maintenance. The effects of time fortunately are still superficial, but deterioration has already set in and unless the house is cared for in the future, they will become serious.

*Rattle and Snap* was the crowning achievement of that great family of builders, the Polks. George Knox Polk, cousin of the eleventh President of the United States, built it in 1845. The odd name is supposed to have been acquired when the land on which the house stands was won in a dice game "Rattle and Snap," with the Governor of North Carolina. There is a second legend that it was also lost by its owner in another session of the same game.

The house as it stands today is essentially unchanged since its construction. The main ballroom originally extended the full depth of the house but has since been divided into

## GRANDEUR IN TENNESSEE

two rooms. Otherwise, trim, mantels, doors, ceiling medallions and ornament are all as they were.

The architect of *Rattle and Snap* is unfortunately unknown. Because of its nearness to Nashville and the date when it was built, William Strickland inevitably comes to mind as the possible designer. However, there are none of the Strickland touches here and *Rattle and Snap* is quite unlike his other work, both in conception and plan. It is most improbable that Strickland had any part in its designing.

Another and more exciting possibility is not to be completely ruled out. Is it not possible that George Polk, when he decided to build himself the grandest house in Tennessee, should consult his cousin James K. Polk, then in the White House, concerning the plans? And would it not be logical, if he had done so, that James Polk should in turn consult his official government architect and perhaps ask him to draw up plans for a great house in Tennessee? Granted that all this is merely conjecture, it would nevertheless be stimulating to think that the then government architect, Robert Mills, should have had a hand in laying out the plans. Even if this conjectural attribution is entirely erroneous, Robert Mills would not be offended; there would be nothing of which to be ashamed. *Rattle and Snap* would certainly do no discredit to the master. Furthermore, it bears a certain resemblance to some of Mills' known work, particularly that which he did in Charleston. There is a drawing in Mills' diary for a projected Masonic Hall in Savannah which bears a striking similarity to *Rattle and Snap*.

### *Belmont*

The third and last to be built was *Belmont*, situated in the city of Nashville. Erected as a residence for the enormously wealthy widow of Major Isaac Franklin (who had remarried and was Mrs. J. A. S. Acklen at the time of the building), *Belmont* was the outcome of lavish expenditure combined with the ambition to build one of the finest houses in the country.

Though it would be difficult to prove, William Strickland was almost certainly its designer; the building is very typical of his work. It would be virtually inevitable that Colonel and Mrs. Acklen, sparing no expense and anxious to have nothing but the best, would turn to Strickland for their plans, since he was, without dispute, the outstanding architect working at the time in Nashville.

*Belmont* was laid out on a truly palatial scale and nothing was stinted on its ornamentation and landscaping. The ironwork on the two wings is of an extraordinary lavishness. Fortunately, fate has been kind to *Belmont*. It stands today as the main feature on the campus of one of the foremost girls' schools in the south to which it has given its name, Ward Belmont Academy. Consequently, it has not suffered with the passage of time and is today in nearly as good condition as when it was built. As much as possible of the original landscaping scheme has been retained and the surrounding academic buildings have been designed and placed with care to harmonize with the original building. The

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two wings which have been directly added to *Belmont*, one on either side, and the building which has been built across the rear, are, unfortunately, the least successful in this respect.

It was inevitable that in order to be suited to its new function, certain changes in the interior plan would need to be made. But these changes for the most part have been handled so intelligently that it is sometimes difficult to determine what is part of the original plan and what is not. Some of the changes in fact may antedate the Civil War. It is difficult, for instance, to account for the great ballroom across the back of the house. The detail is carried out in quite a different idiom and for no apparent reason (unless this part is all added to Strickland's original design), the Italian bracketed villa style appears. Could this part have been once an open porch, and converted to a very rich and elaborate room after *Belmont* had been already built and by another hand than Strickland's? The period of the style is roughly contemporaneous but at variance with the rest of the building.





## ILLUSTRATIONS AND DRAWINGS

*1784-1845*



LOG CABIN ON THE BELLE MEADE ESTATE. Original dwelling of the family of Giles Harding, occupied during the building of Belle Meade. *Ca. 1805.*



ROCK CASTLE, Hendersonville, Sumner County. Built by General Daniel Smith. 1784.

The first of the three stone houses to be built near Gallatin, Sumner County. The foundations were laid by General Daniel Smith in 1784 but, due to frequent Indian attacks, seven years were consumed in its construction. This is probably the first house of importance to be built in Middle Tennessee. The exterior walls are of rough-cut native limestone. Supports of two-story porch are wooden piers with entasis.



THE SPRING HOUSE



ROCK CASTLE.  
South Front



West Front



ROCK CASTLE, Interior.



Rock Castle. Interior.



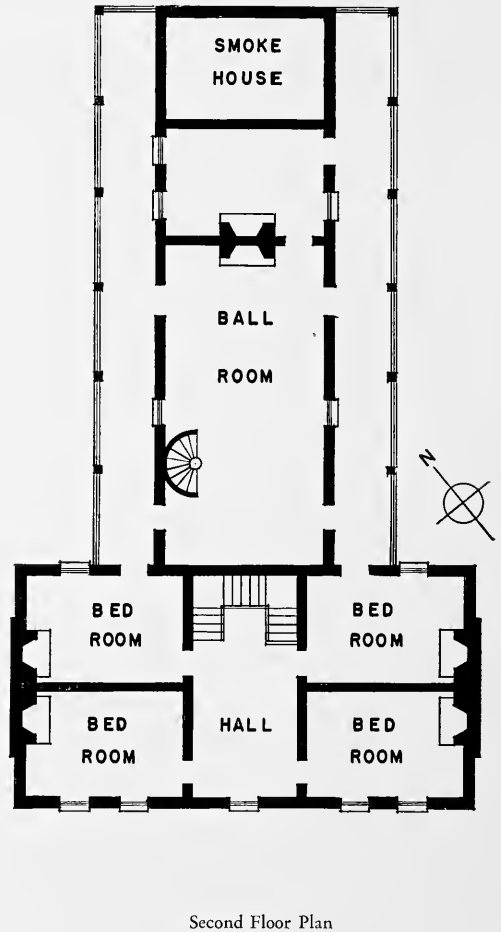
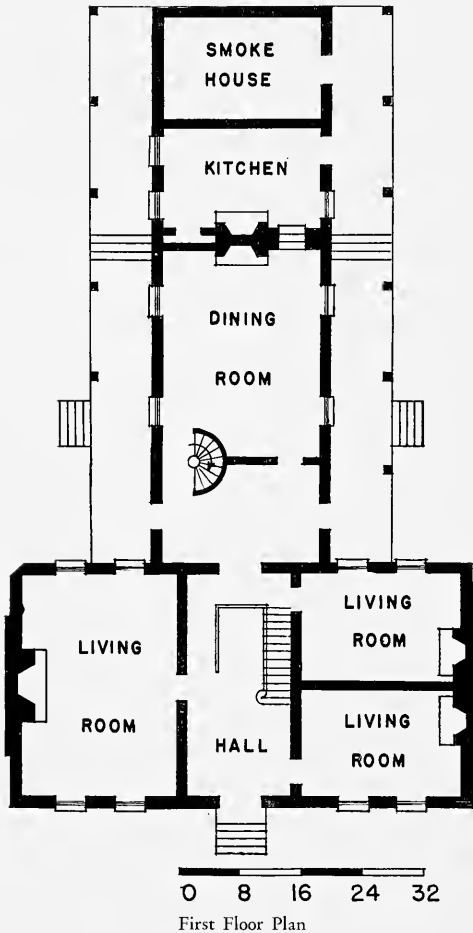


SPENCER'S CHOICE. Built by Col. David Shelby, 1798. The house has been greatly altered in recent years.

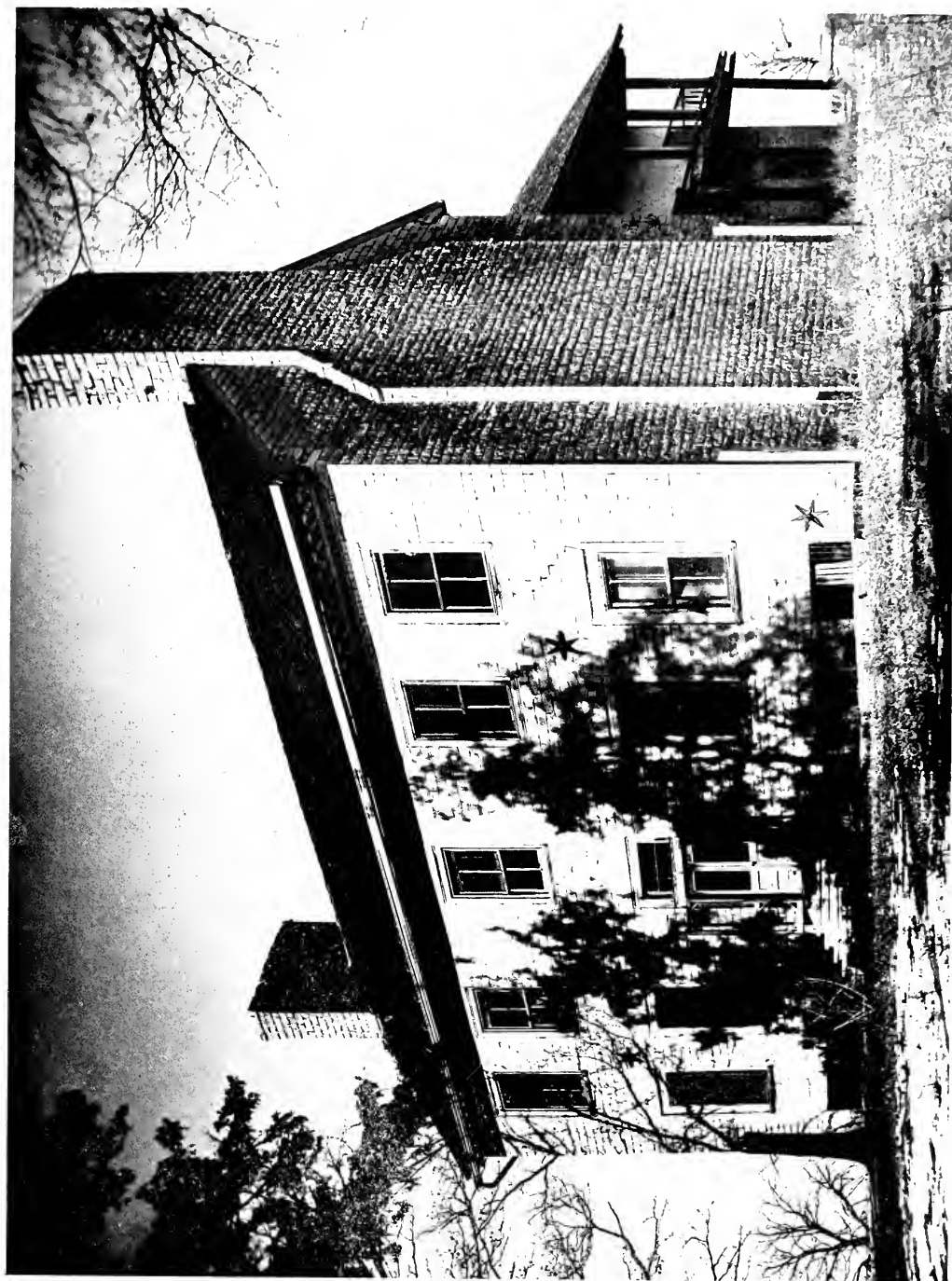
# Cragfont

*Castalian Springs, Sumner County*

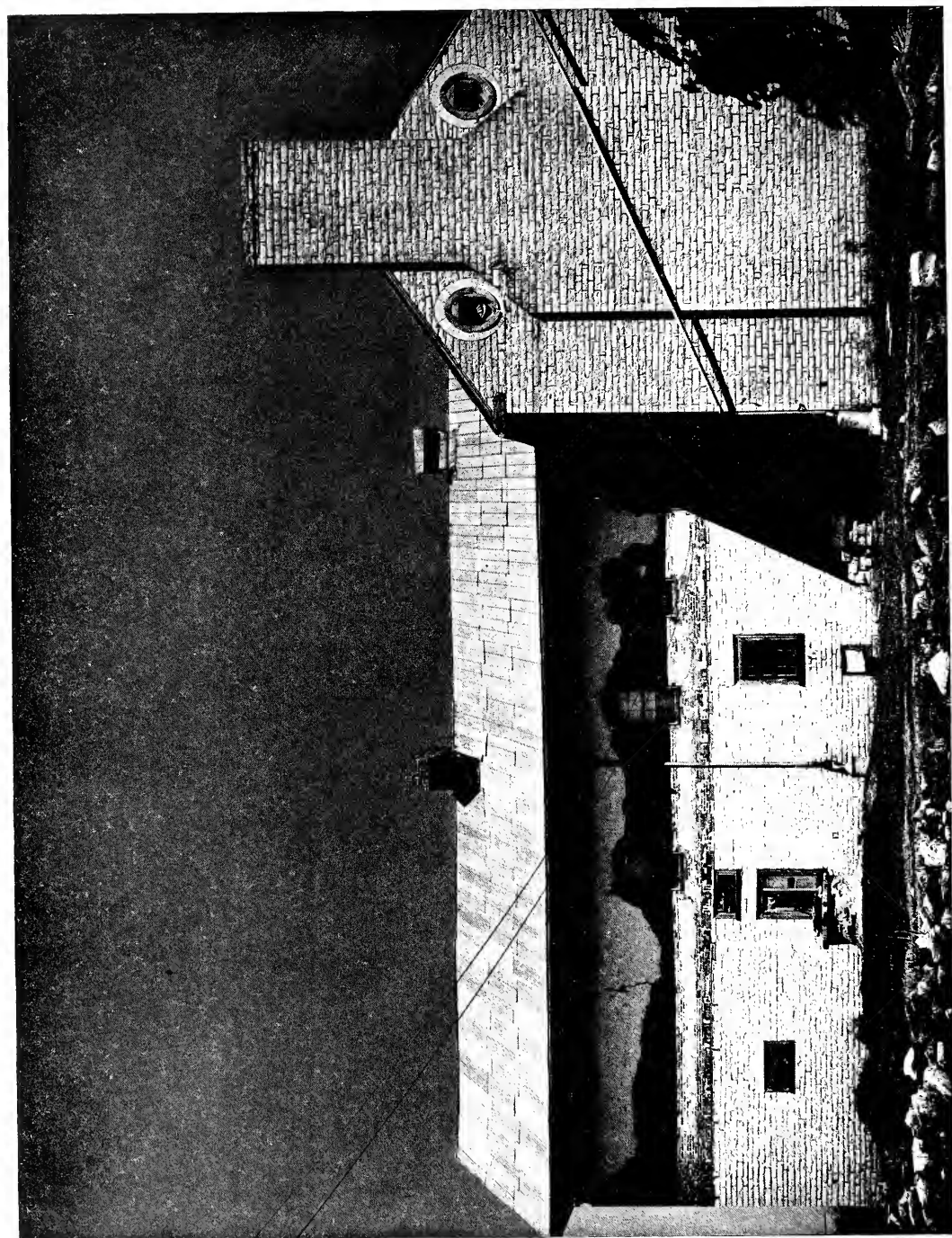
Built between the years 1798-1802 by General James Winchester. The workmen are said to have been imported from Baltimore, Maryland, and possibly helped to build ROCK CASTLE and SPENCER'S CHOICE. The verandahs on either side of the wing projecting to the rear which contains the ballroom have been removed in recent years causing the strange overhang of the roof. The windows are not the originals.







Cragmont, Castalian Springs, Sumner County.



Cragfont, Castalian Springs, Sumner County, West Front.



SAMUEL POLK HOUSE.  
(Father of President  
James Knox Polk).  
Columbia, Maury County.  
Built *Ca.* 1808.



Interior



HOUSE AT LEADVALE, Jefferson County. Date unknown, probably *ca.* 1815.

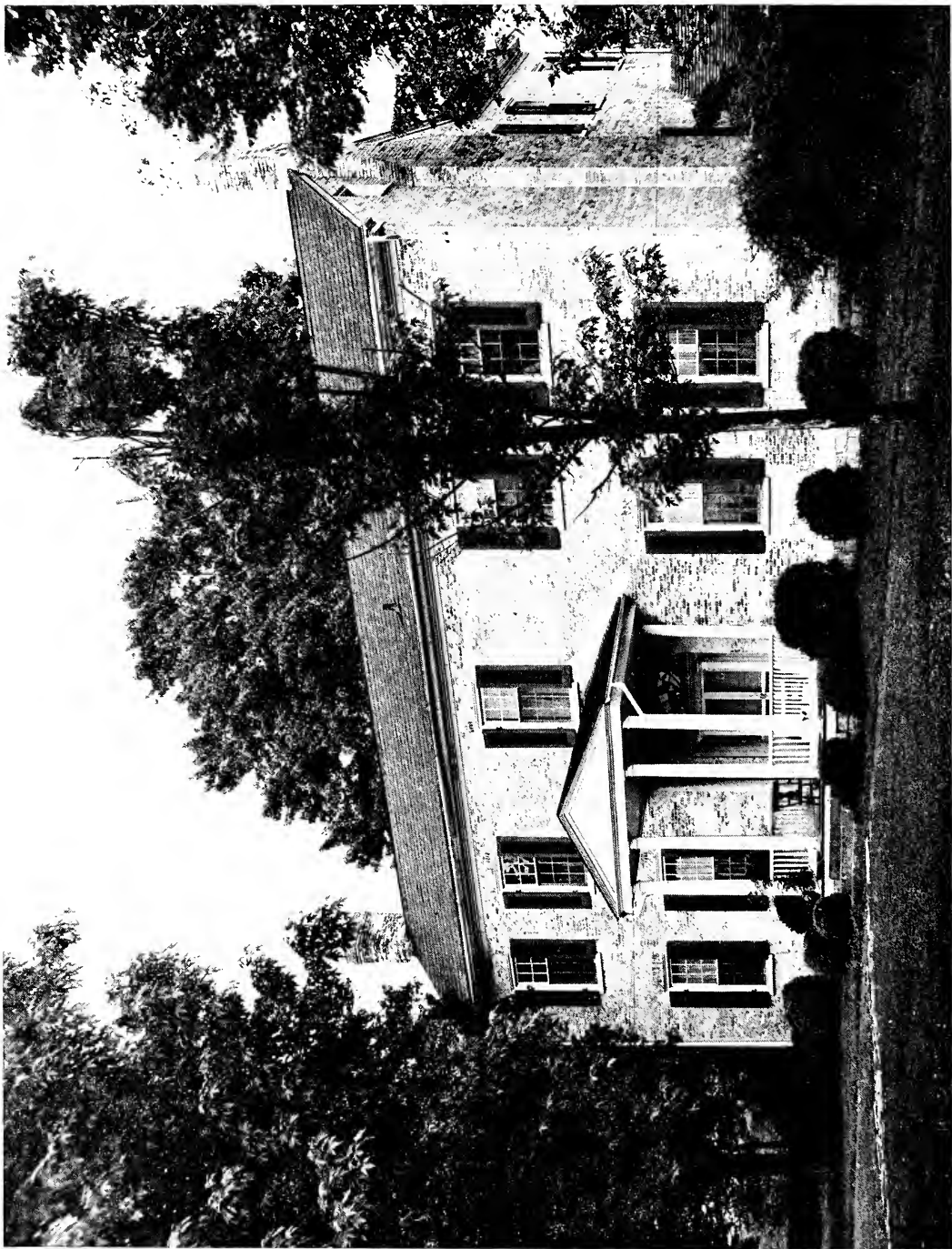


WESSYNGTON, Cedar Hill, Robertson County. Built by Joseph Washington. 1819.

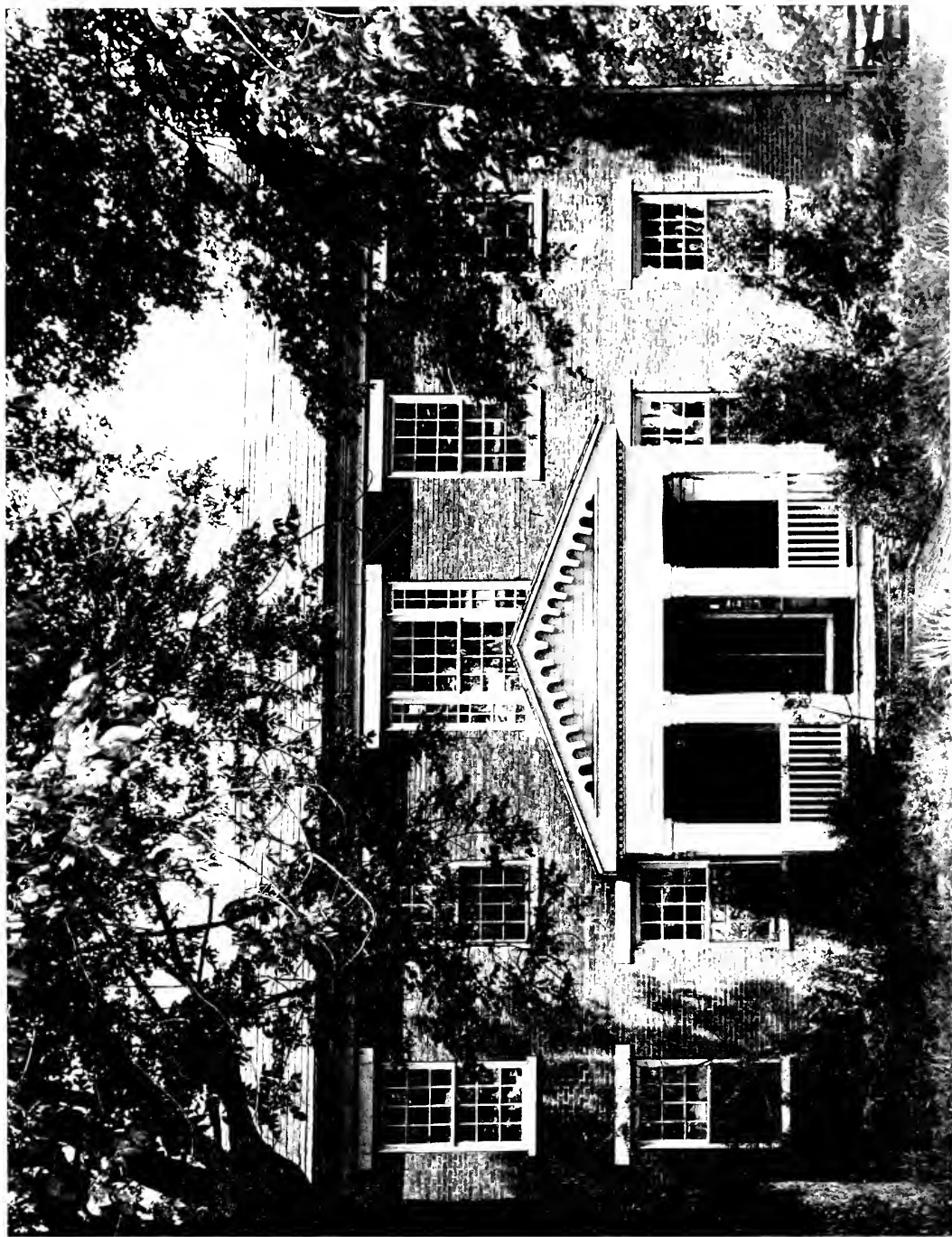


East Front





SPRINGHAVEN, Saundersville, Sumner County. 1825-27.



THE DR. CARR HOUSE, Castalian Springs, Sumner County, 1892.

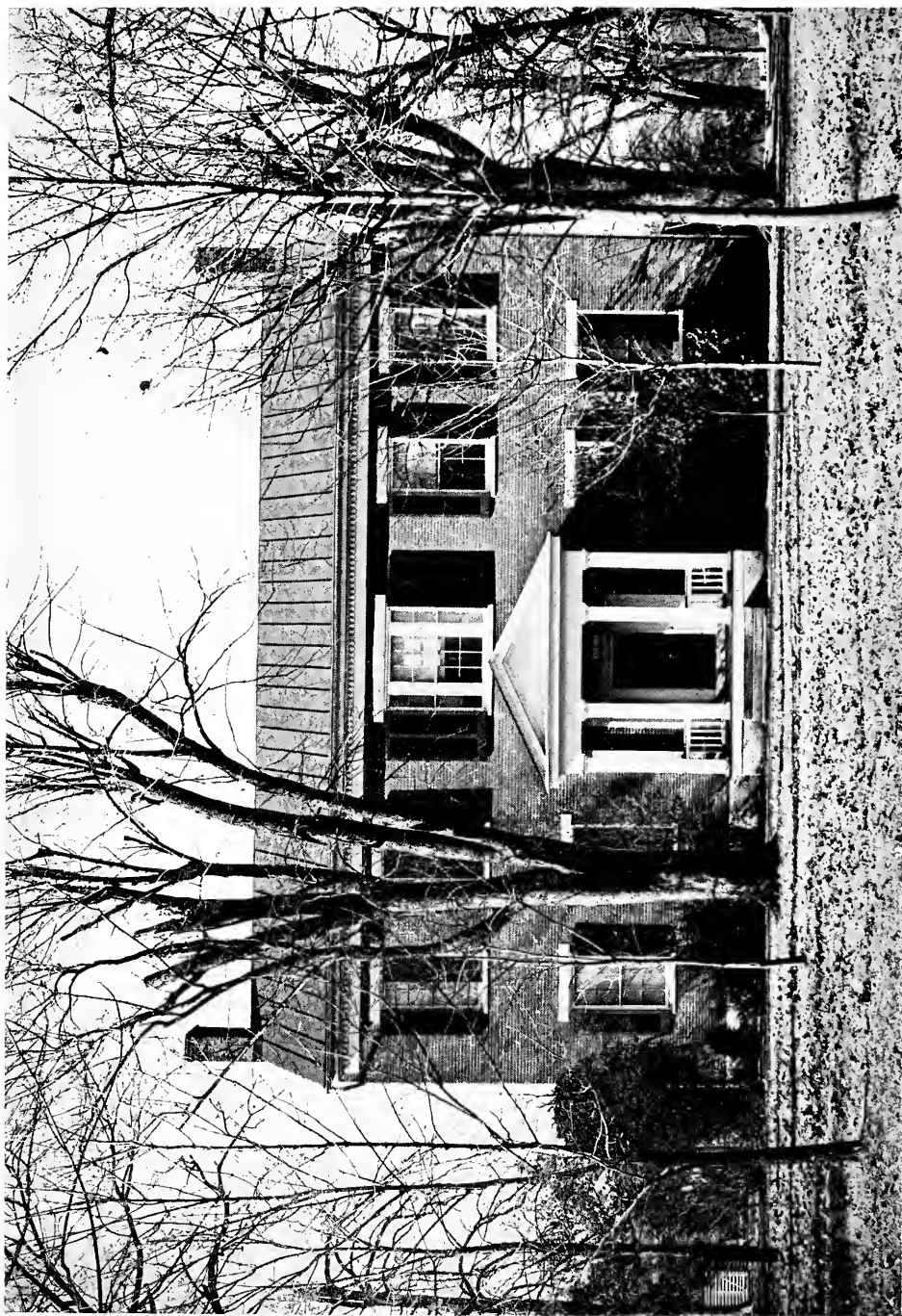


THE TAVERN, Castalian Springs, Sumner County. 1828. A tardy example of Log cabin construction.





MERCER HALL, Columbia, Maury County. Originally built by Dr. William Leacock. Ca. 1823. Greatly modified at a later date.



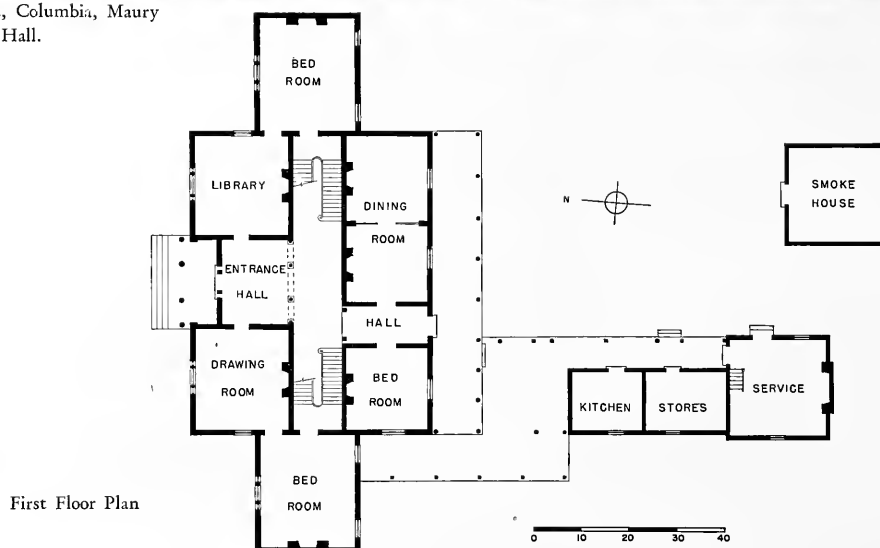
OAKLAND, Gallatin, Sumner County. Built by David Mentlo. Ca. 1835.



HAMILTON PLACE, Columbia, Maury County. Built by Lucius Polk, 1832.



HAMILTON PLACE, Columbia, Maury County. Entrance Hall.





HAMILTON PLACE, Columbia, Maury County. Side View.



Window Detail

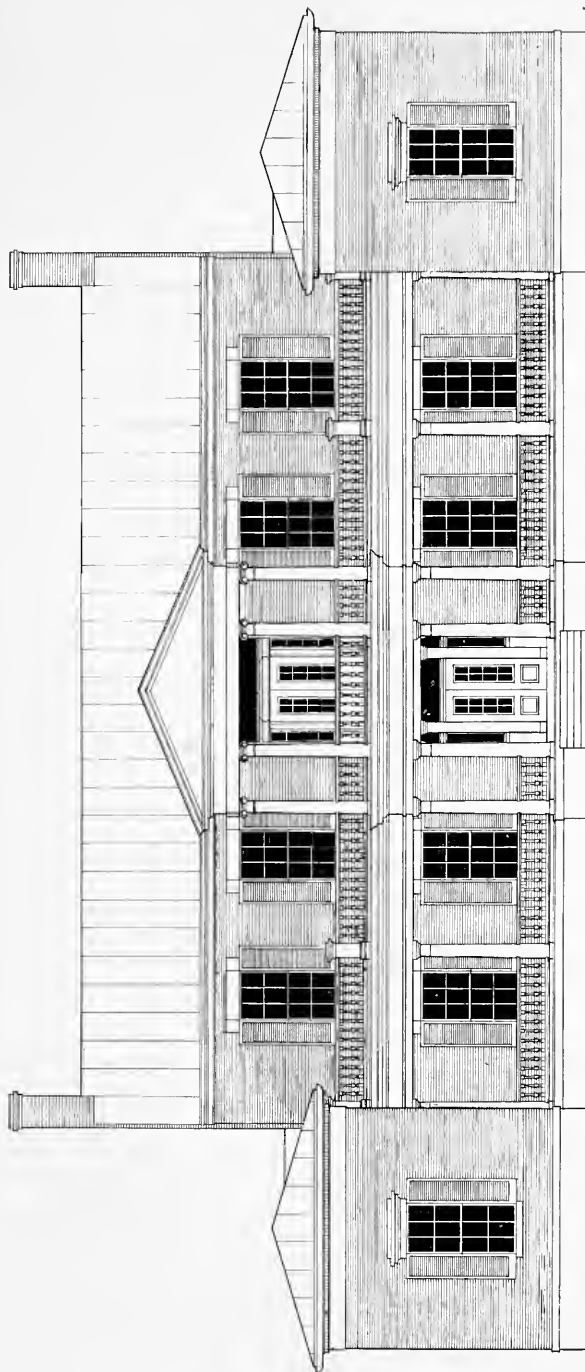


The Smoke House

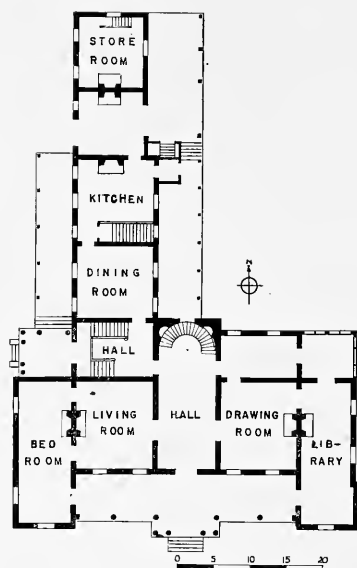




BELAIR, Donelson, Davidson County. Built by Joseph Clay. 1832. Flanking wings added 1838.



BELAIR, Donelson, Davidson County. South Elevation.



First Floor Plan



BELAIR, Donelson, Davidson County. West Front





BELAIR, Donelson, Davidson County. From the Southeast.



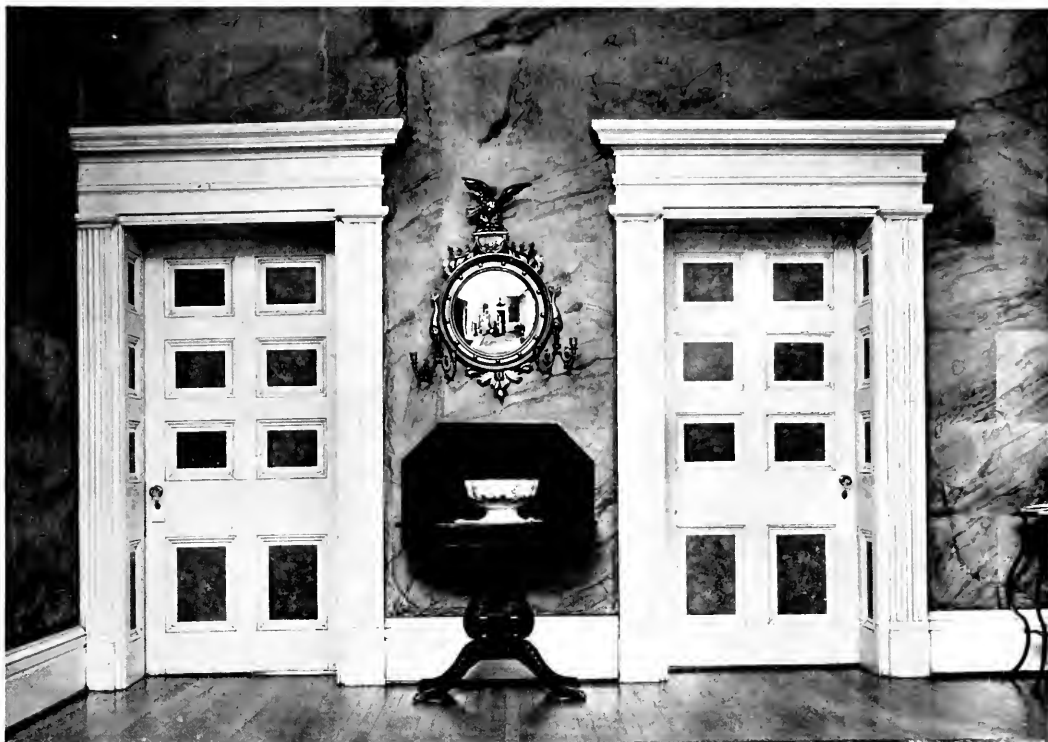
BELAIR, Donelson, Davidson County. Entrance Hall.



Col. SHEPHERD HOUSE, Hickory Valley, Hamilton County, Built by Col. Lewis Shepherd. Ca. 1835.



TULIP GROVE, Dondson, Davidson County. Built by General Andrew Jackson for his adopted son Andrew Donelson, 1834. (Builders: Jos. Reiff and William Hume).



TULIP GROVE, Donelson, Davidson County. Front Hall. Walls painted to resemble marble.  
Painted panels in doors simulate wood graining.



Cornice Detail



From the North



Tomb of President Andrew Jackson

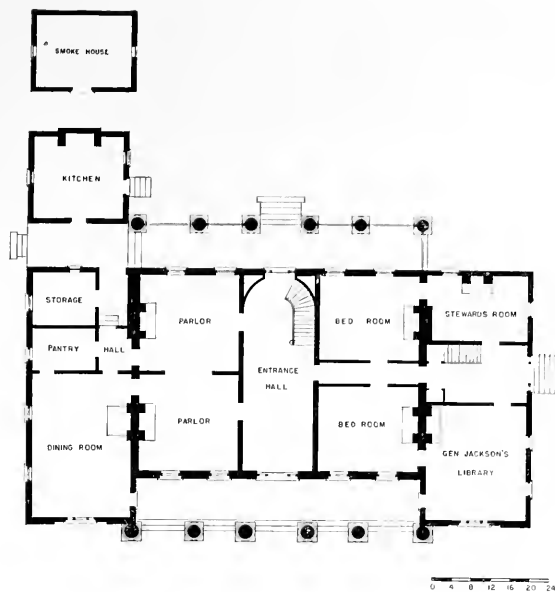
## THE HERMITAGE

*Donelson, Davidson County*

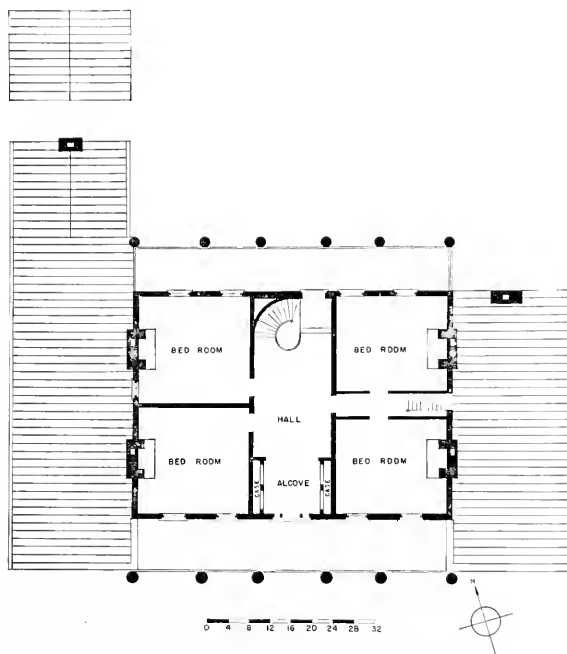
THE HERMITAGE was originally built by General Andrew Jackson in 1819. Judging from the very few illustrations of it which exist, it was a plain brick house, unadorned, of five bays, with a gable roof and four chimneys. In 1831, when Andrew Jackson was president of the United States, the two flanking wings were added, a portico was thrown across the north front, and a one-story porch (two stories over the front door, joining the wings) was built across the south front. This latter porch is almost identical with the one found today at neighboring BELAIR in Donelson. The portico on the north front was presumably much as it is now.

In 1834 the HERMITAGE burned. The house was gutted but the walls remained standing. The President set about rebuilding it immediately and engaged the carpenter-builders, Joseph Reiff and William Hume, the builders of nearby TULIP GROVE, to complete the work. The basic structure, since the walls were not destroyed remained essentially unchanged. However, incorporated in the new design was a six-column Corinthian portico, two stories high, on the south front. Since this was one of the gable ends of the roof, it posed a problem to the architects which was solved with only partial success. The entablature was bound to be higher than the eaves on the ends and now forms a sort of parapet which is rather awkward in appearance. On the north front where the triangle formed by the gable end serves as a pediment, the problem has been handled more successfully. The house stands today exactly as it was rebuilt by President Jackson and is extremely well preserved.

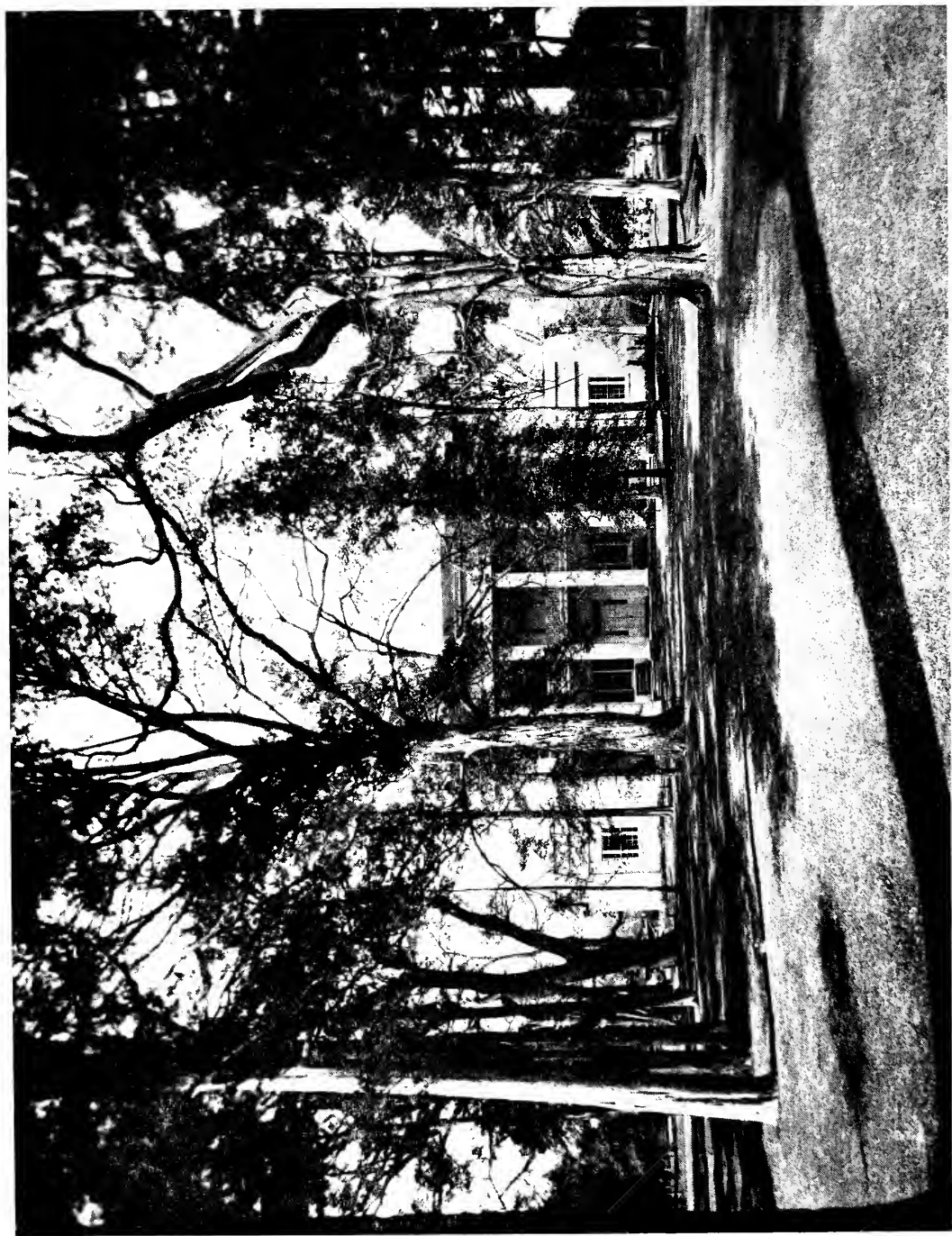




THE HERMITAGE, Donelson, Davidson County. First Floor Plan

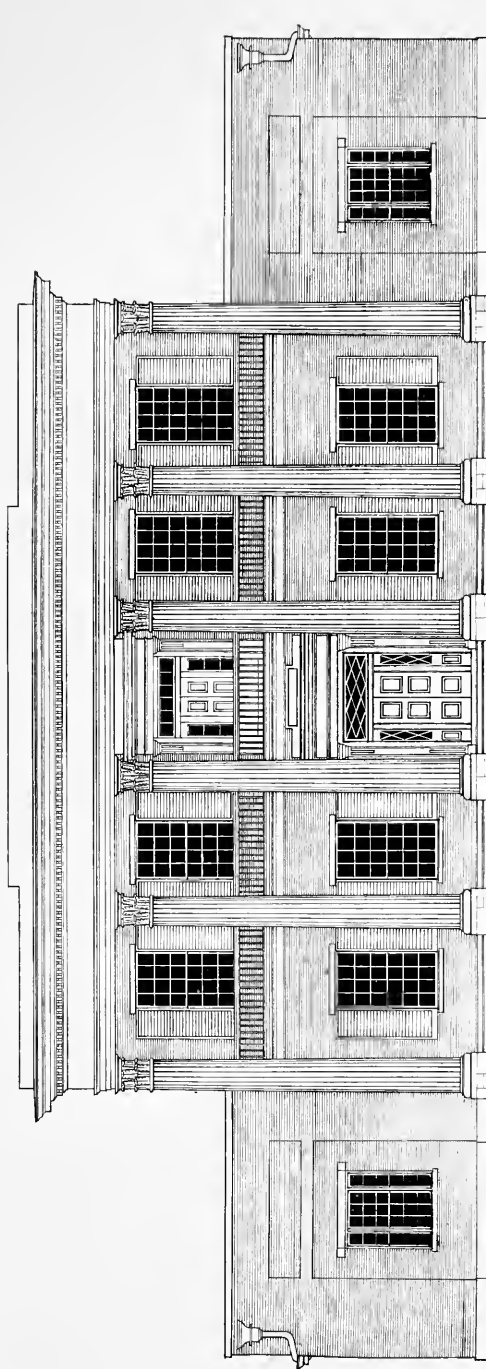


Second Floor Plan



THE HERMITAGE, Donelson, Davidson County. South Front.

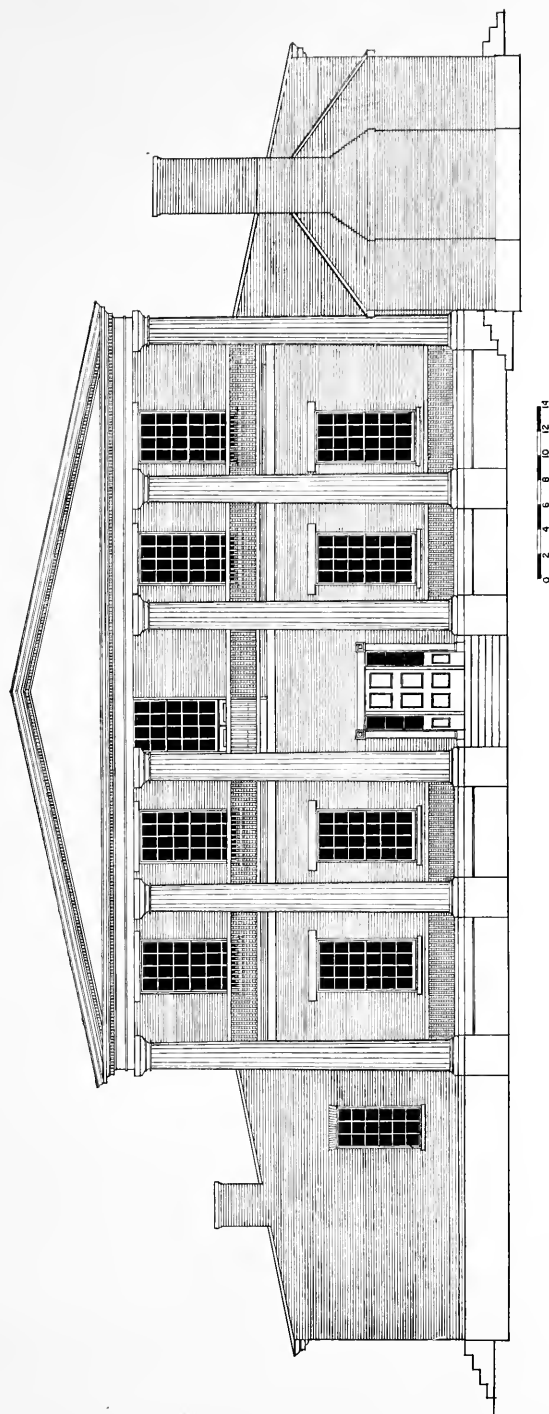




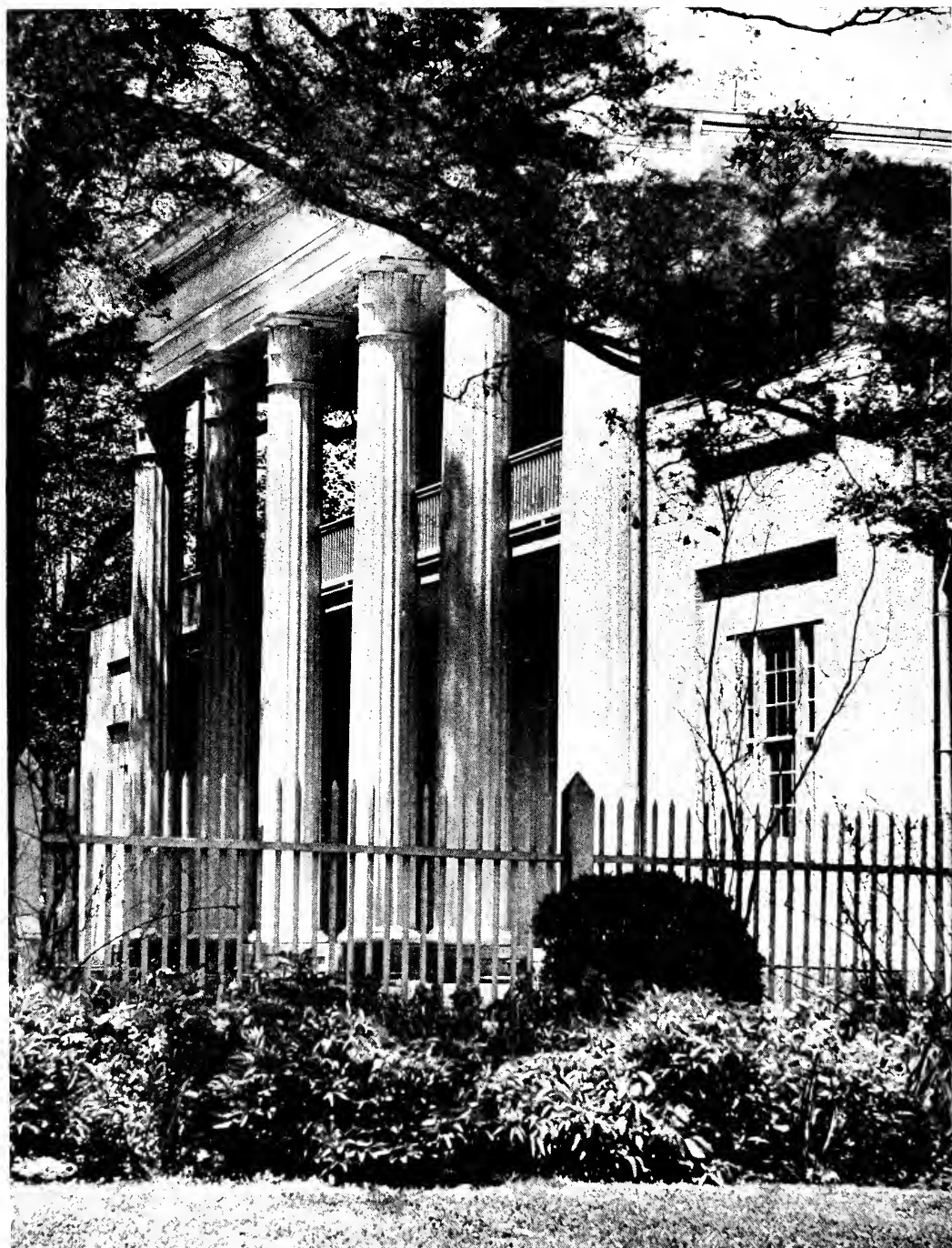
THE HERMITAGE, Donelson, Davidson County. South Front.



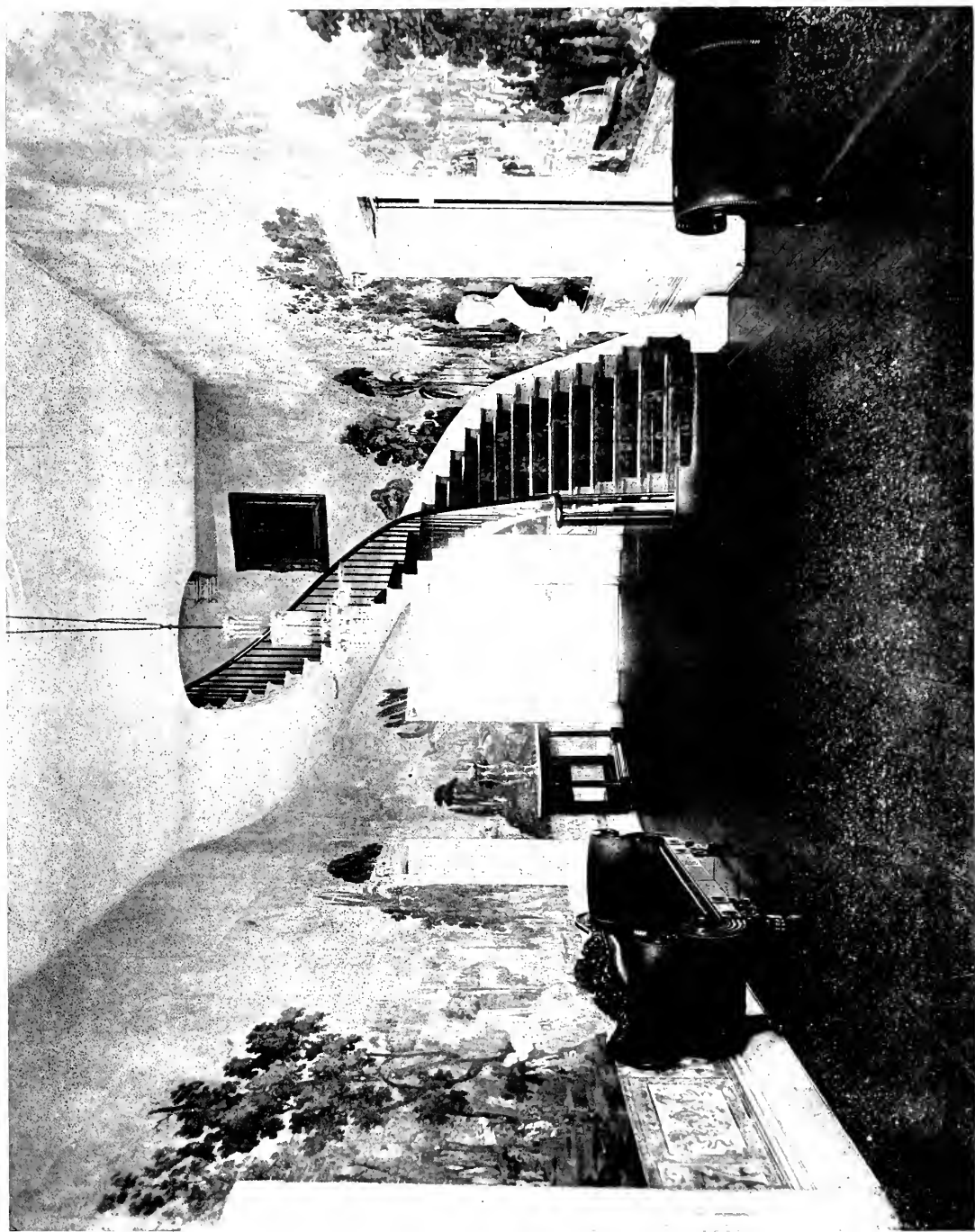
THE HERMITAGE, Donelson, Davidson County, North Front.



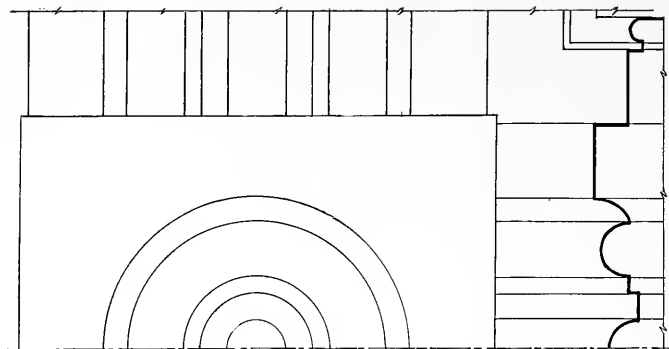
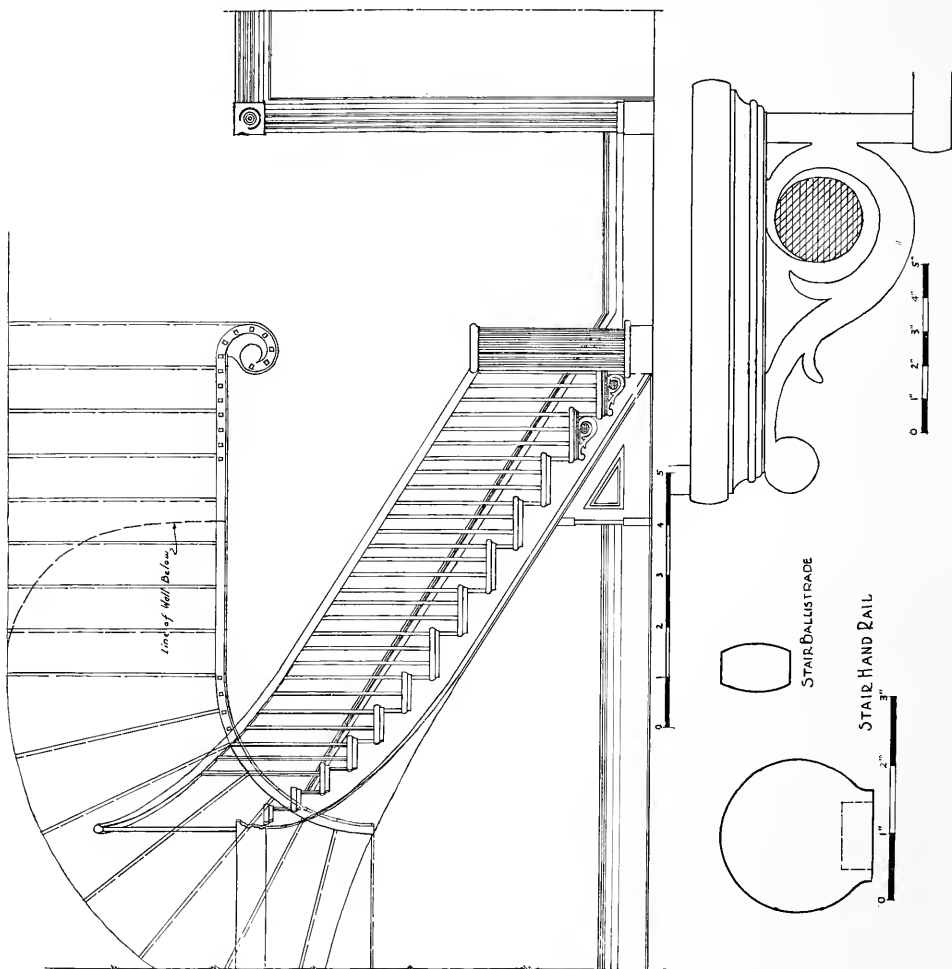
THE HERMITAGE, Donelson, Davidson County. North Front.



THE HERMITAGE, Donelson, Davidson County. From the Southeast.

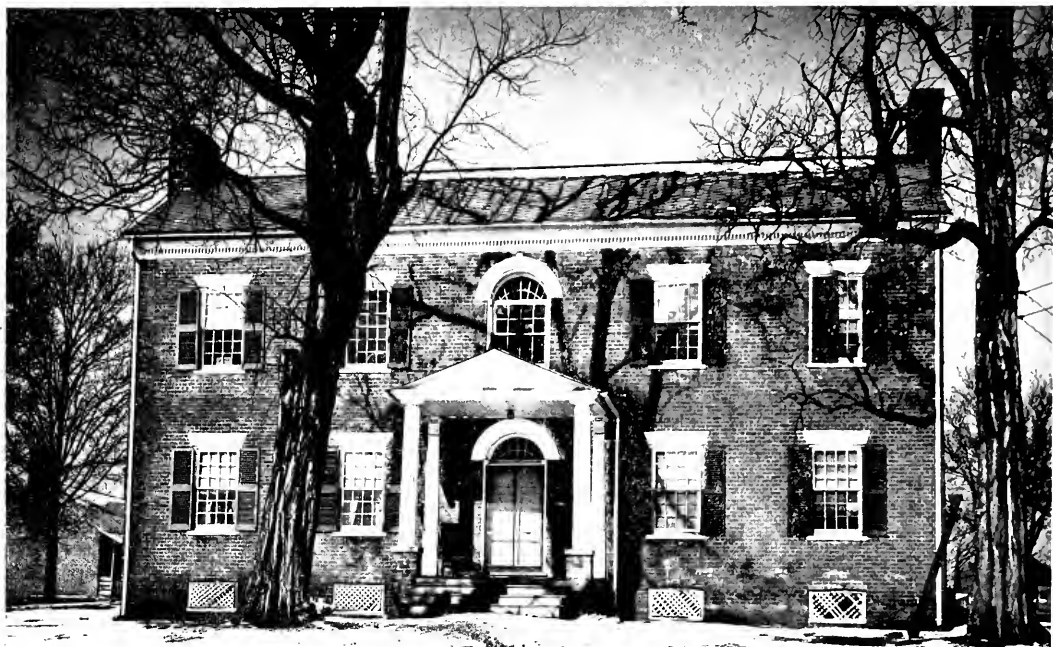


THE HERMITAGE, Dandeson, Davidson County, The Front Hall.



THE HERMITAGE, Donelson, Davidson County. Details of Front Hall.

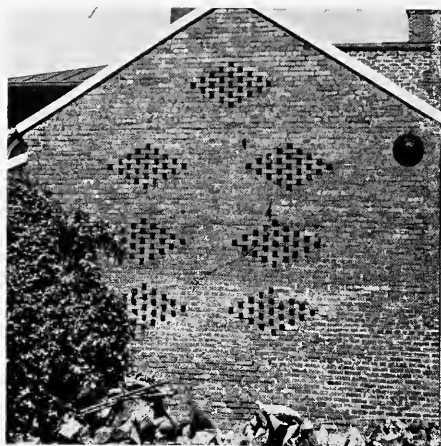




North Front.



BRAZELTON PLACE, New Market, Jefferson County. Built by Major General William Brazelton, 1832. From the Southeast.



Brick Detail of Wing

## FAIRVIEW

*Gallatin, Sumner County*

FAIRVIEW was built in 1832 by Isaac Franklin, the son of an early settler in East Tennessee. He amassed a huge fortune for the times and owned land in Louisiana and Texas.

The unusual service wing which projects from the south end of the main block rather than to the rear (an arrangement found nowhere else in Tennessee) was added in 1839. The arched openings, very unusual so far north, are strongly reminiscent of New Orleans architecture. Perhaps the inspiration for this design was brought back by Isaac Franklin during his travels in the Southwest. The fact that the wing extends from the main dwelling allows the latter to have two identically similar facades east and west.

On his death Isaac Franklin left FAIRVIEW to his widow, who later married Colonel J. A. S. Acklen and built the great house BELMONT in Nashville. It has recently, after a period of disintegration, been completely restored.



Individual Horse Stall





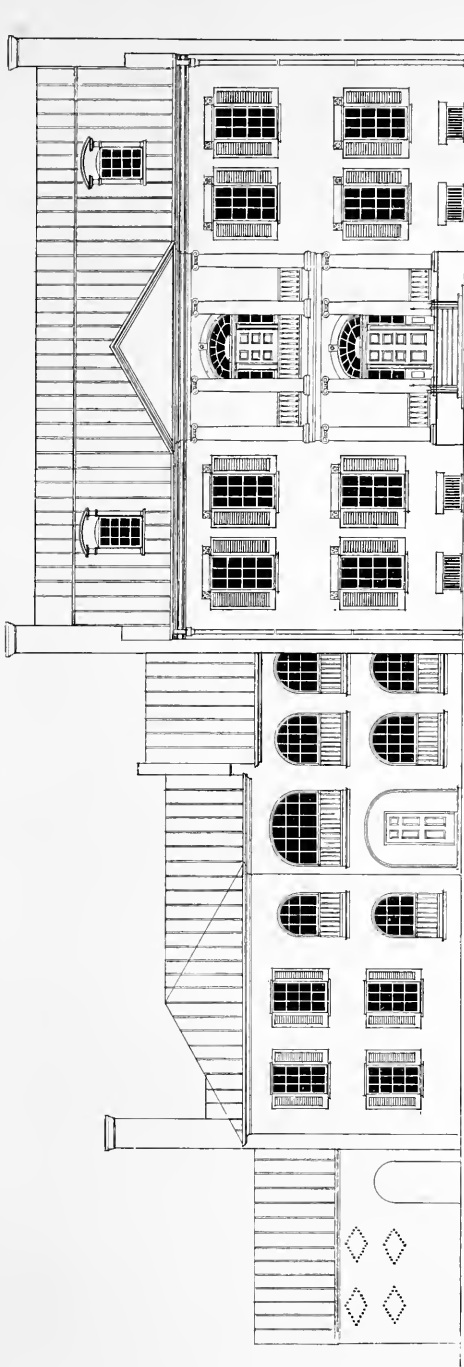
Ice House



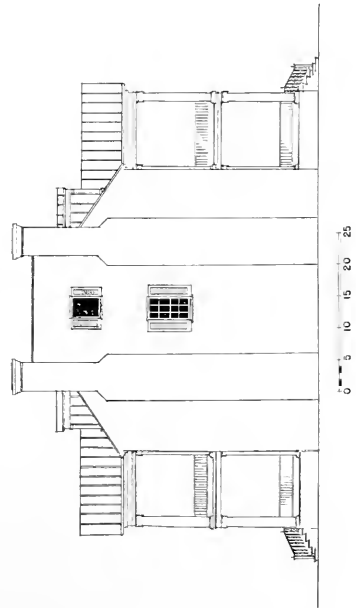
FAIRVIEW, Gallatin, Sumner County. West Front



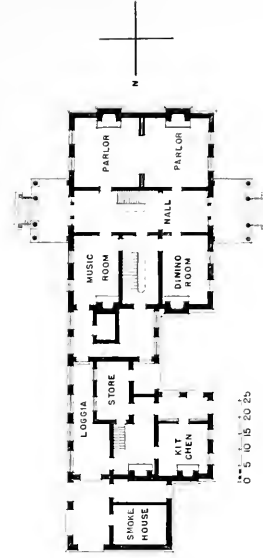
FAIRVIEW, Gallatin, Sumner County, East Front



FAIRVIEW, Gallatin, Sumner County. East Front



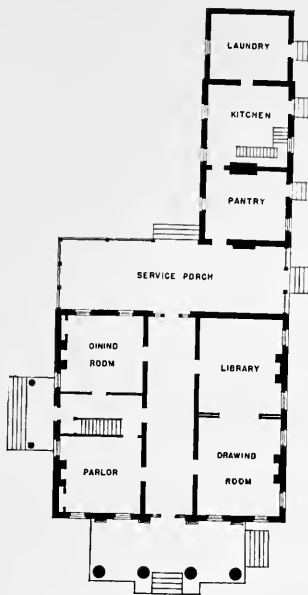
North Front



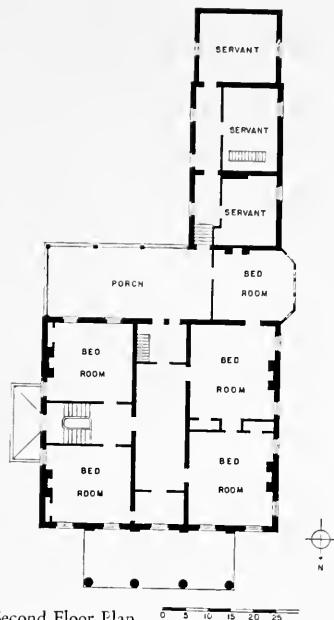
First Floor Plan



THE HUNT PHELAN HOUSE, Memphis, Shelby County. Built by George H. Whyett. 1835.



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

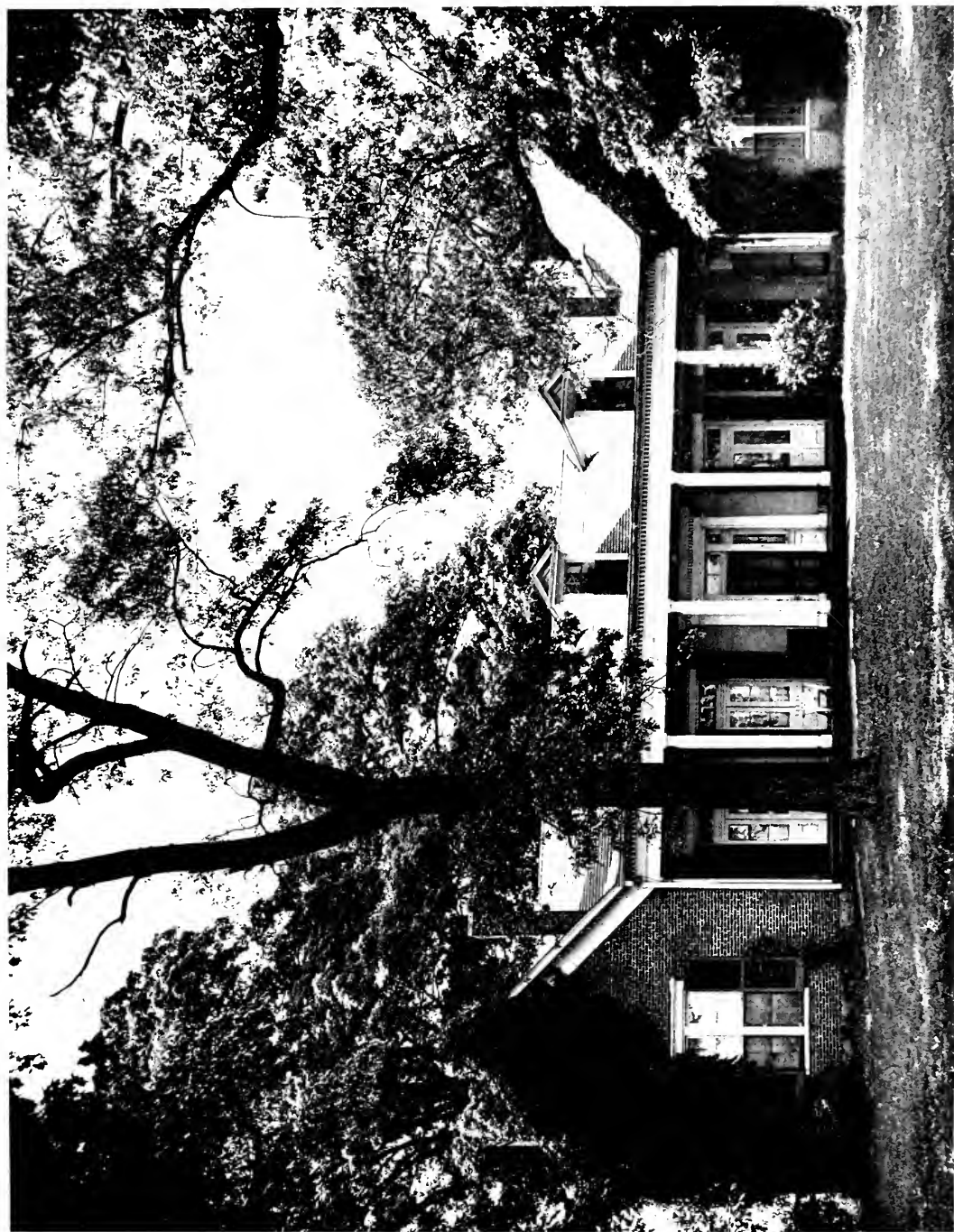


THE HUNT PHELAN HOUSE, Memphis, Shelby County. North Front

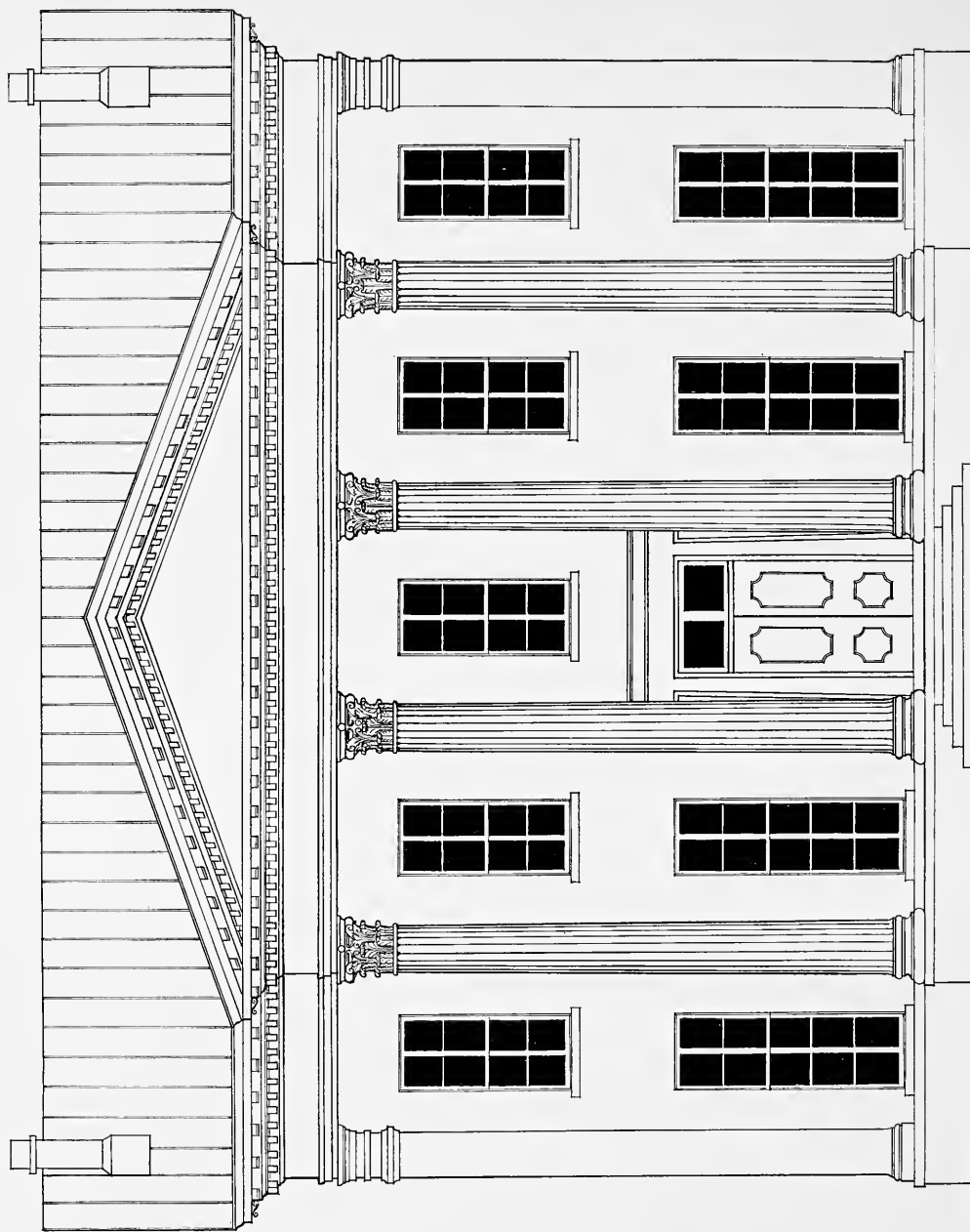


SUNNYSIDE FARM, Hendersonville, Sumner County, 1835.



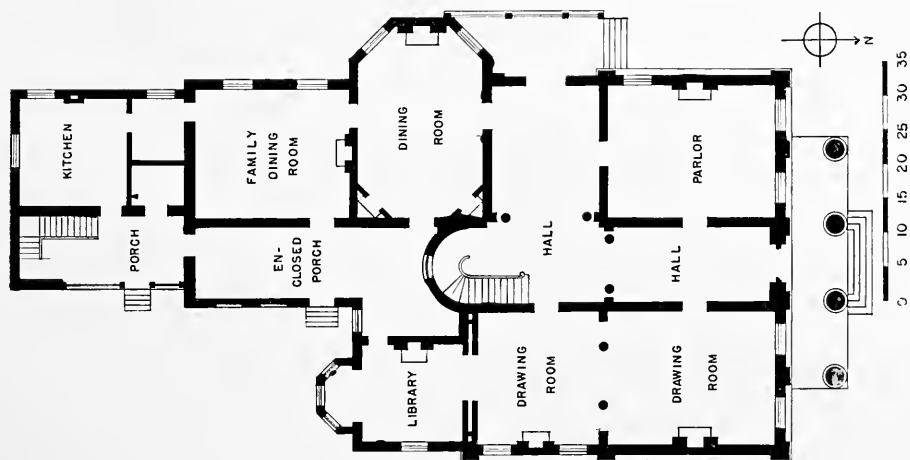


OAKHAM, McMinnyville, Warren County. Built by Major L. D. Mercer. *Ca. 1833*. Wings added by Phillip Marbury. *Ca. 1850*.



0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14  
 THE ROBERTSON TOPP HOUSE, Memphis, Shelby County. Built by Robertson Topp. Ca. 1835. Now destroyed.



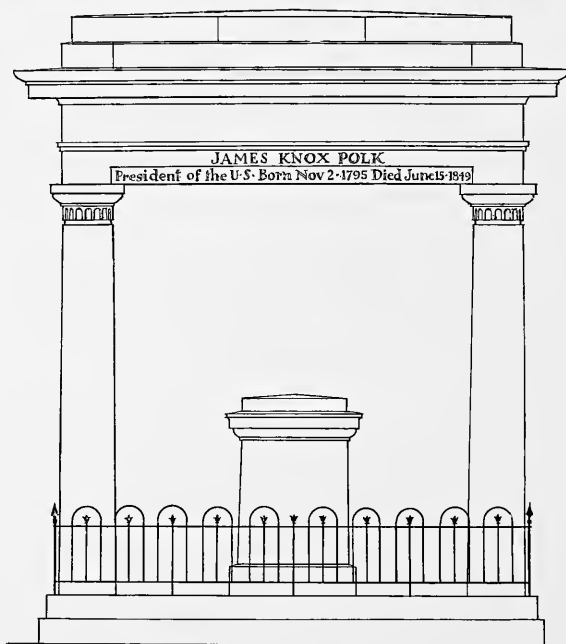


First Floor Plan.

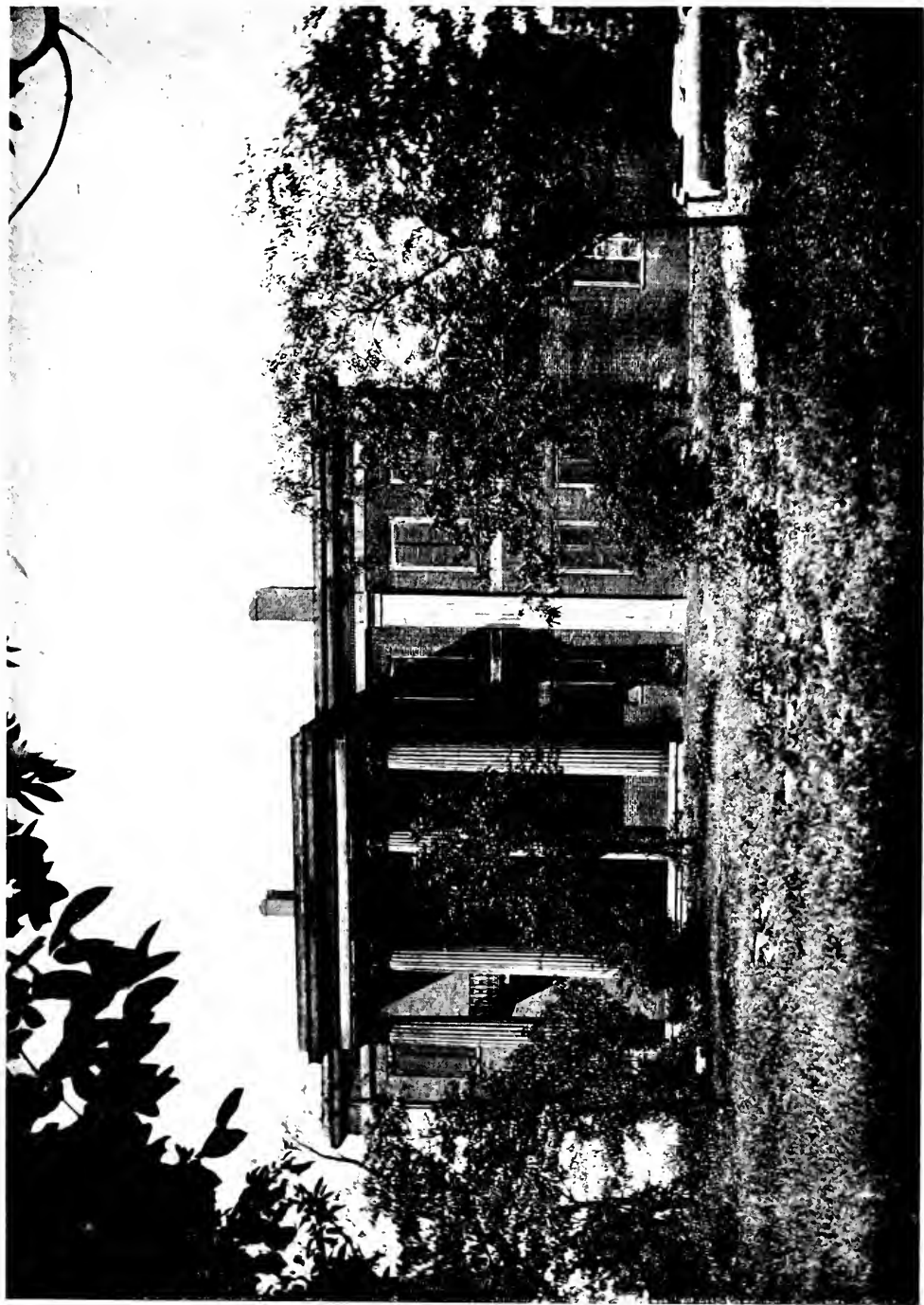


Second Floor Plan.

THE ROBERTSON TOPP HOUSE, MEMPHIS, SHELBY COUNTY



THE TOMB OF PRESIDENT JAMES KNOX POLK, Nashville, Davidson County. Formerly on the grounds of Polk Place, moved to the grounds of the Tennessee State Capitol. Designed by William Strickland.



POUR PLANT, Nashville, Davidson County, Built by Felix Grundy, Ca. 1810, Purchased and remodeled by President James Knox Polk, Ca. 1840, Recently torn down. From an old photograph. Remodeling probably by William Strickland.



PILLOW-BETHEL HOUSE. The Office.

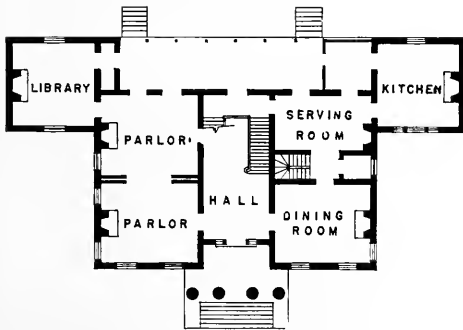


CLIFTON PLACE. The Granary.

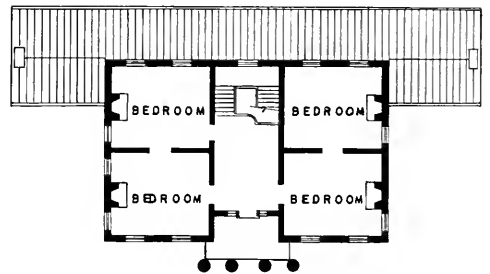
## THE PILLOW FAMILY HOUSES

*Columbia, Maury County*

General Gideon Pillow came to Tennessee early in the nineteenth century where he acquired a tract of five thousand acres in Maury County. On this tract General Pillow later built three of the outstanding houses in that county for himself and his sons: CLIFTON PLACE, for his own occupation; BETHEL PLACE (now known as the PILLOW-BETHEL PLACE), for his son Jerome; and PILLOW PLACE (now known as the PILLOW-HALIDAY HOUSE), for his son Granville. The striking similarity of the Ionic order used in all three houses, as well as that of the plans, leads one to conclude that the same person designed all three houses.



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

CLIFTON PLACE



CLIFTON PLACE, Columbia, Maury County. Built by General Gideon Pillow. Ca. 1840.



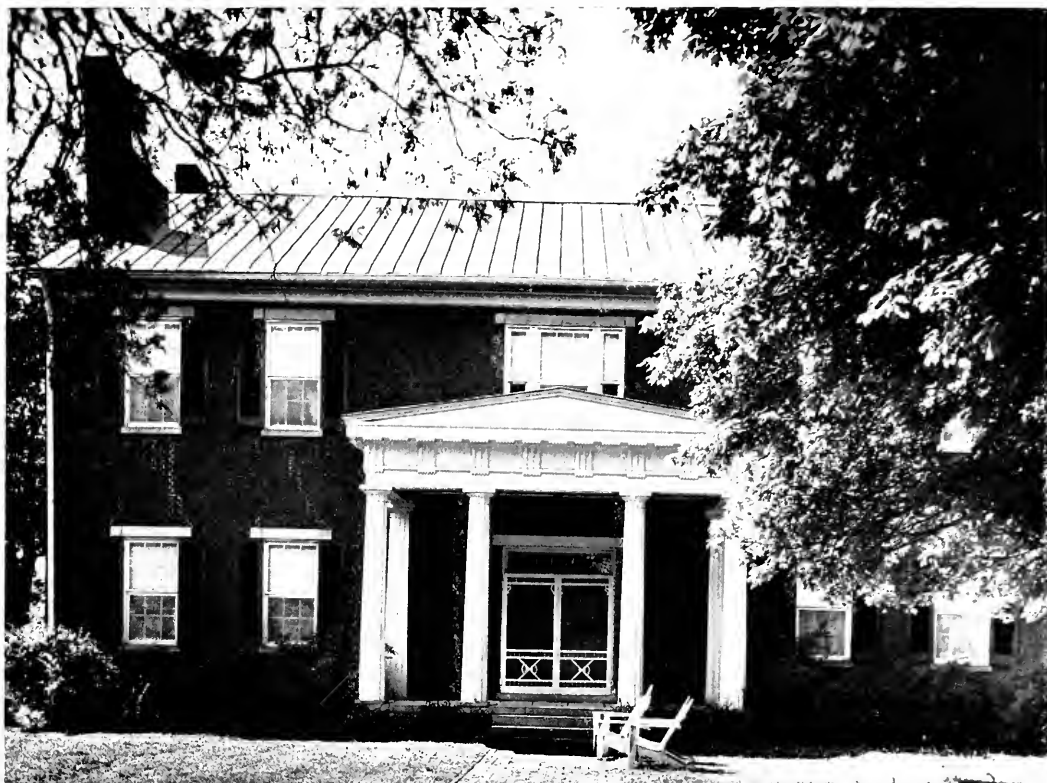
THE PILLOW BURNT HOUSE. Built by General Gideon Pillow. Ca. 1840.





THE PILLOW-HALIDAY HOUSE, Columbia, Maury County. Built by General Gideon Pillow, Ca. 1845.





CLEVELAND HALL, Donelson, Davidson County. Built by Capt. Stockley Donelson. 1841. North Front.



Rear View



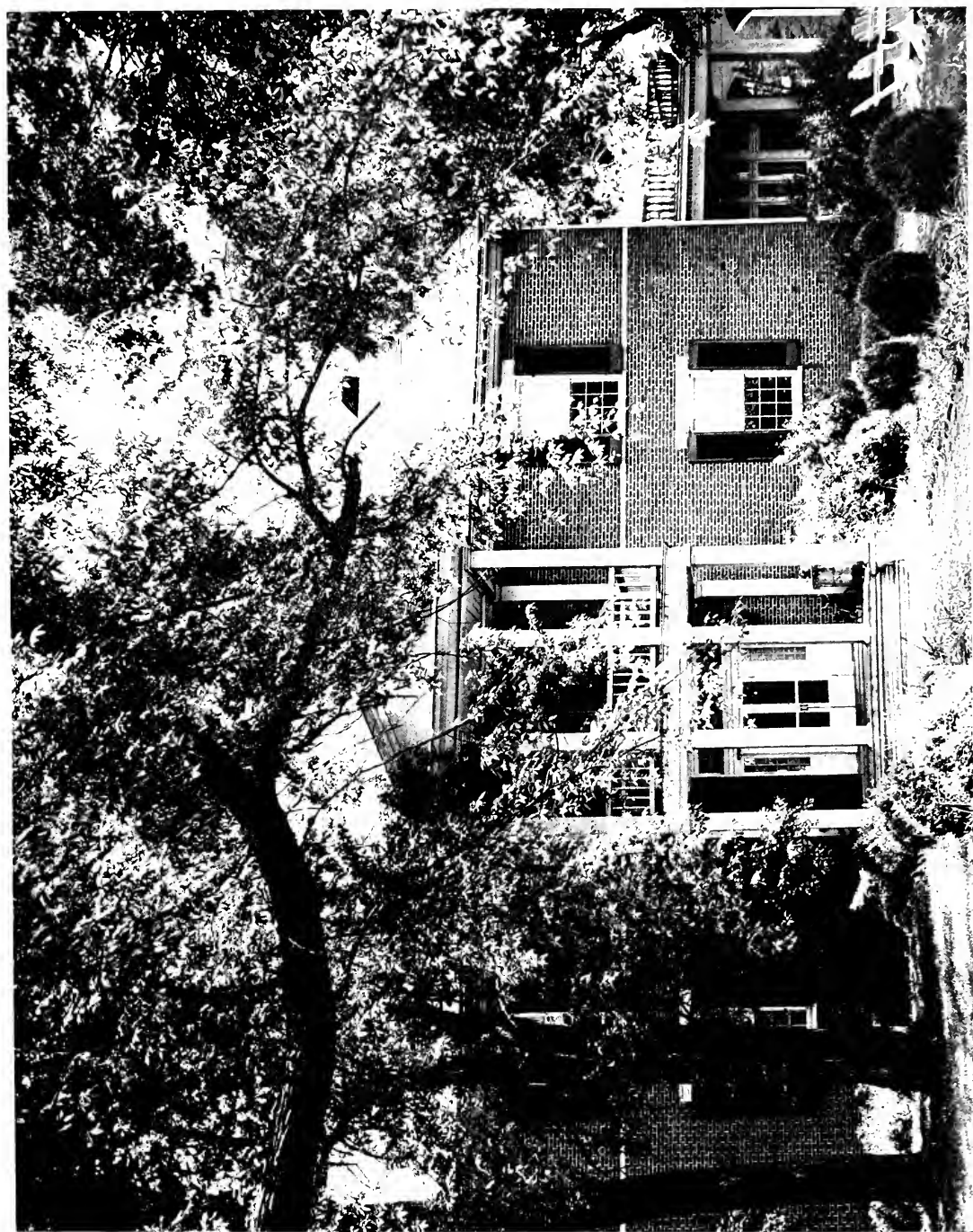
THE MASONIC TEMPLE, Rogersville, Hawkins County. 1846.



THE MAJOR FRANKLIN HOUSE, Leadvale, Jefferson County. Date unknown.



COLONIAL HALL, Pulaski, Giles County, Built by Dr. William Batte. Circa 1845.



ELMWOOD, Murfreesboro, Rutherford County. Built by Thomas Hood. 1842.





Cast Iron Porch

## RATTLE AND SNAP

*Columbia, Maury County  
Built by George K. Polk. 1845.*

Probably the most monumental house in Tennessee, RATTLE AND SNAP was built by George K. Polk in 1845. Unfortunately the architect is unknown.

The front portico, of ten Corinthian columns, rests on a terrace with rusticated walls raised four feet above ground level. The fluted

wooden shafts of the columns, which are twenty-six feet high, rest on stone bases and the capitals are made of cast iron acanthus leaves and volutes, screwed to a wooden core.

The entrance portico on the west side uses the Corinthian order of the Temple of the Winds.

The semi-circular cast-iron porch on the east side with its exquisite detail surmounts a stone terrace with delicate rustication.

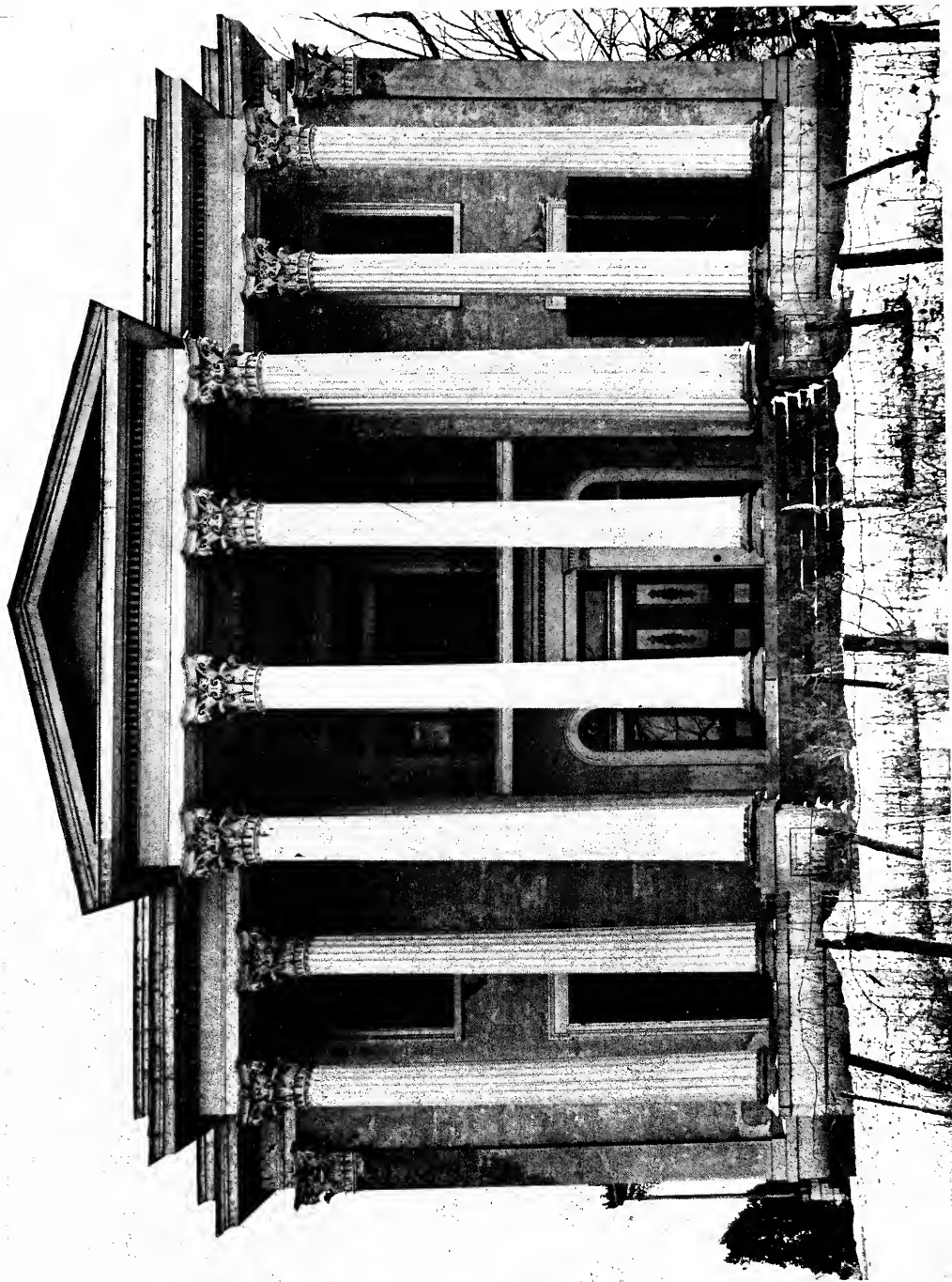
The interior is unusual in plan in its removal of the stairway from the main entrance hall to a side hall of secondary importance. The Corinthian order of the Temple of the Winds is repeated in the main hall and the ballroom (though it has since been removed from the latter).



Detail of Corinthian Capital

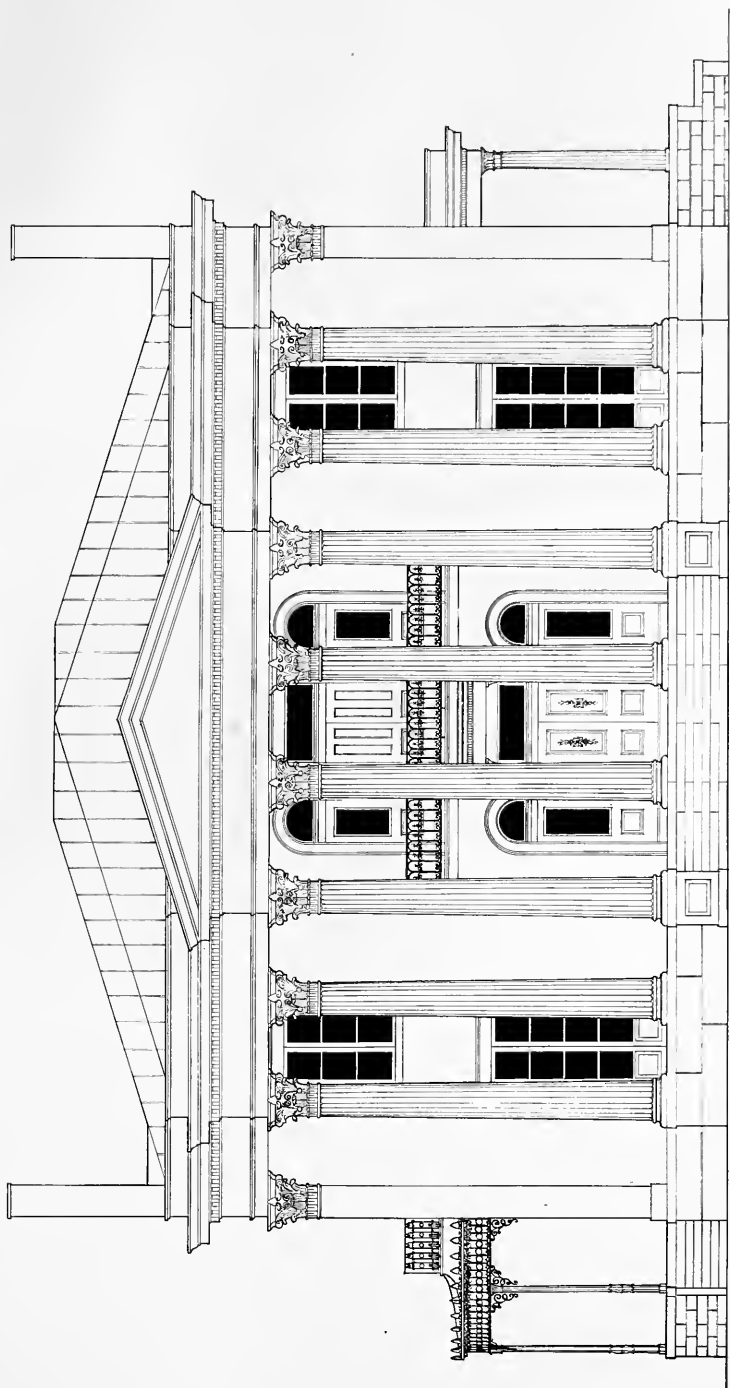


RATLIFF AND SNAP, Columbia, Maury County. Built by George K. Polk. 1845. From the Northwest.



RATTLE AND SNAP, Columbia, Maury County. North Front

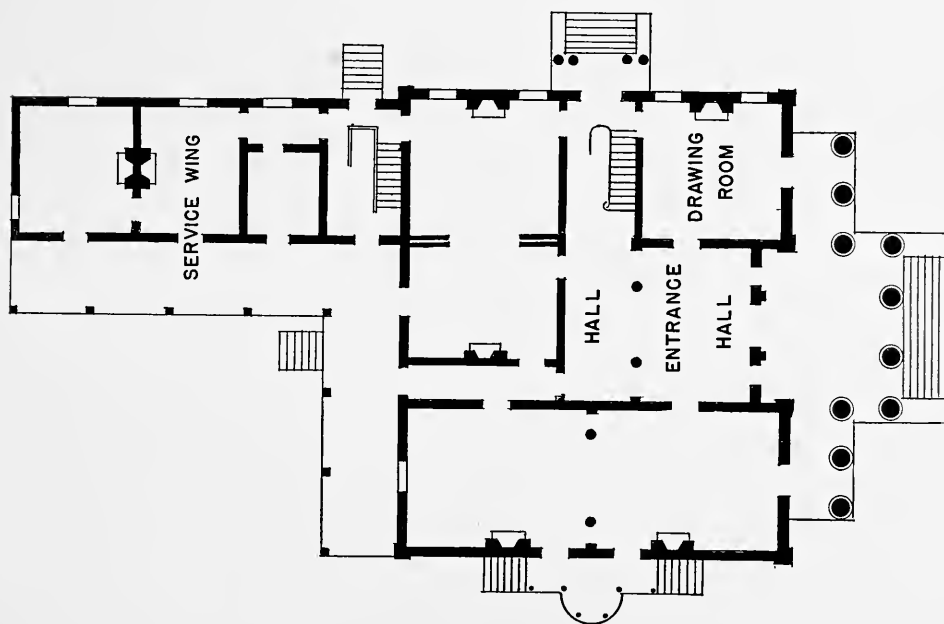




RATLIF AND SNAP, Columbia, Maury County. North Front.

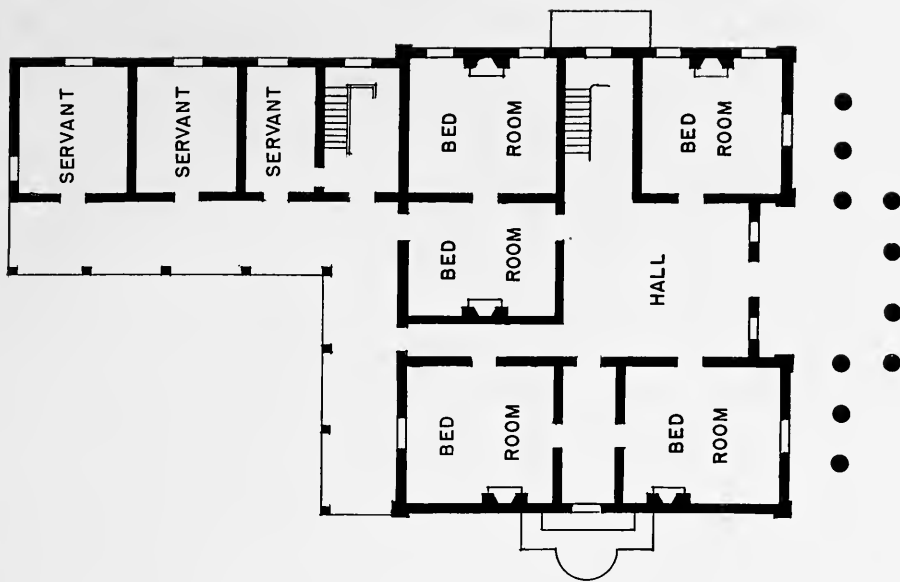


RATTLE AND SNAP, Columbia, Maury County. Porch on West Front.

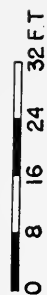


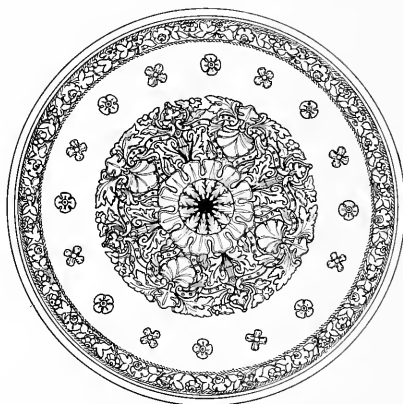
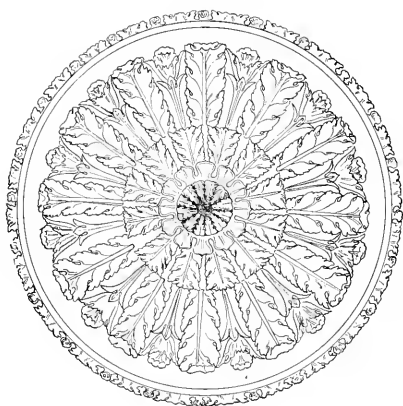
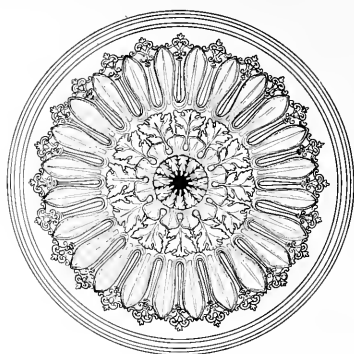
First Floor Plan

RATTLE AND SNAP, Columbia, Maury County.



Second Floor Plan





RATTLE AND SNAP, Columbia, Maury County. Ceiling Medallions.



RATHI AND SNAP, Columbia, Maury County. Details of Entrance Hall.



# BUILDINGS BY WILLIAM STRICKLAND

1844-1854

THE TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL

RIVERWOOD

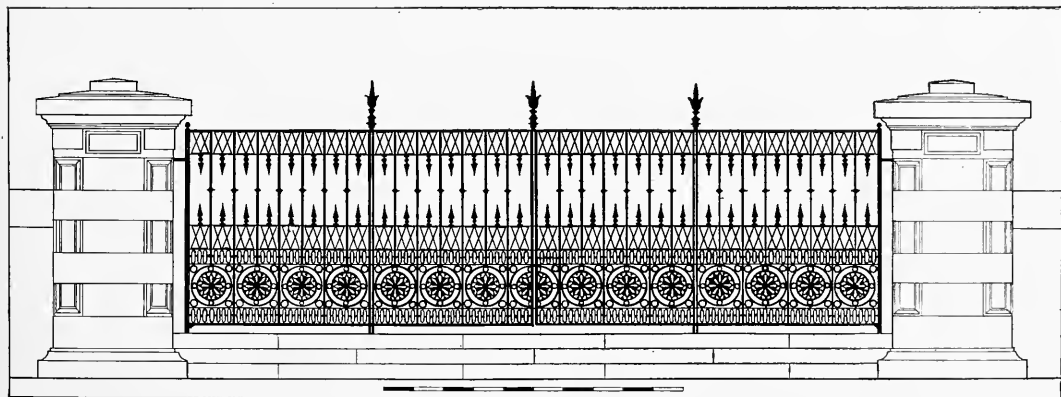
ST. MARY'S CHURCH

THE OLD DAVIDSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BELLE MEADE

BELMONT

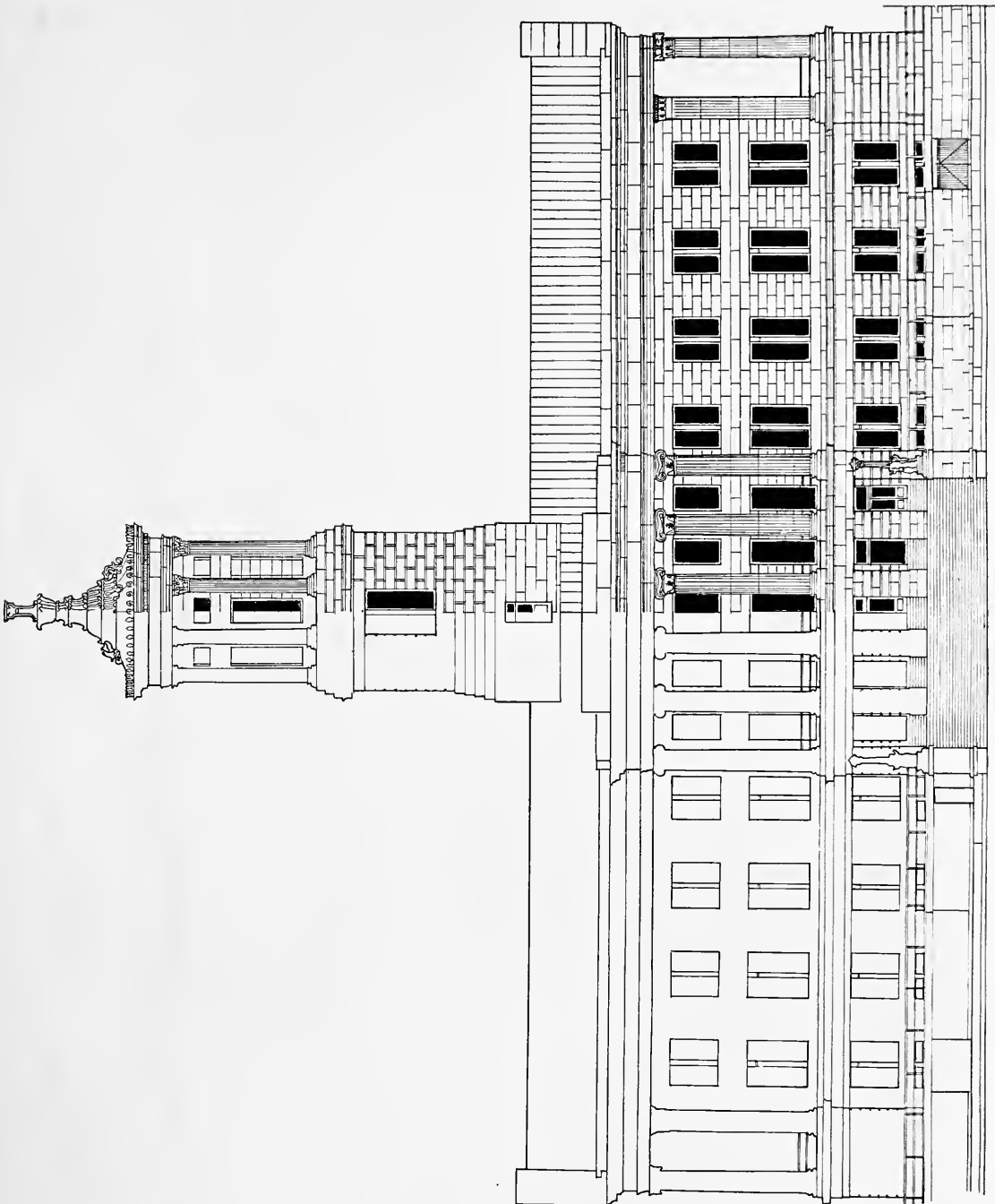


TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Gates.



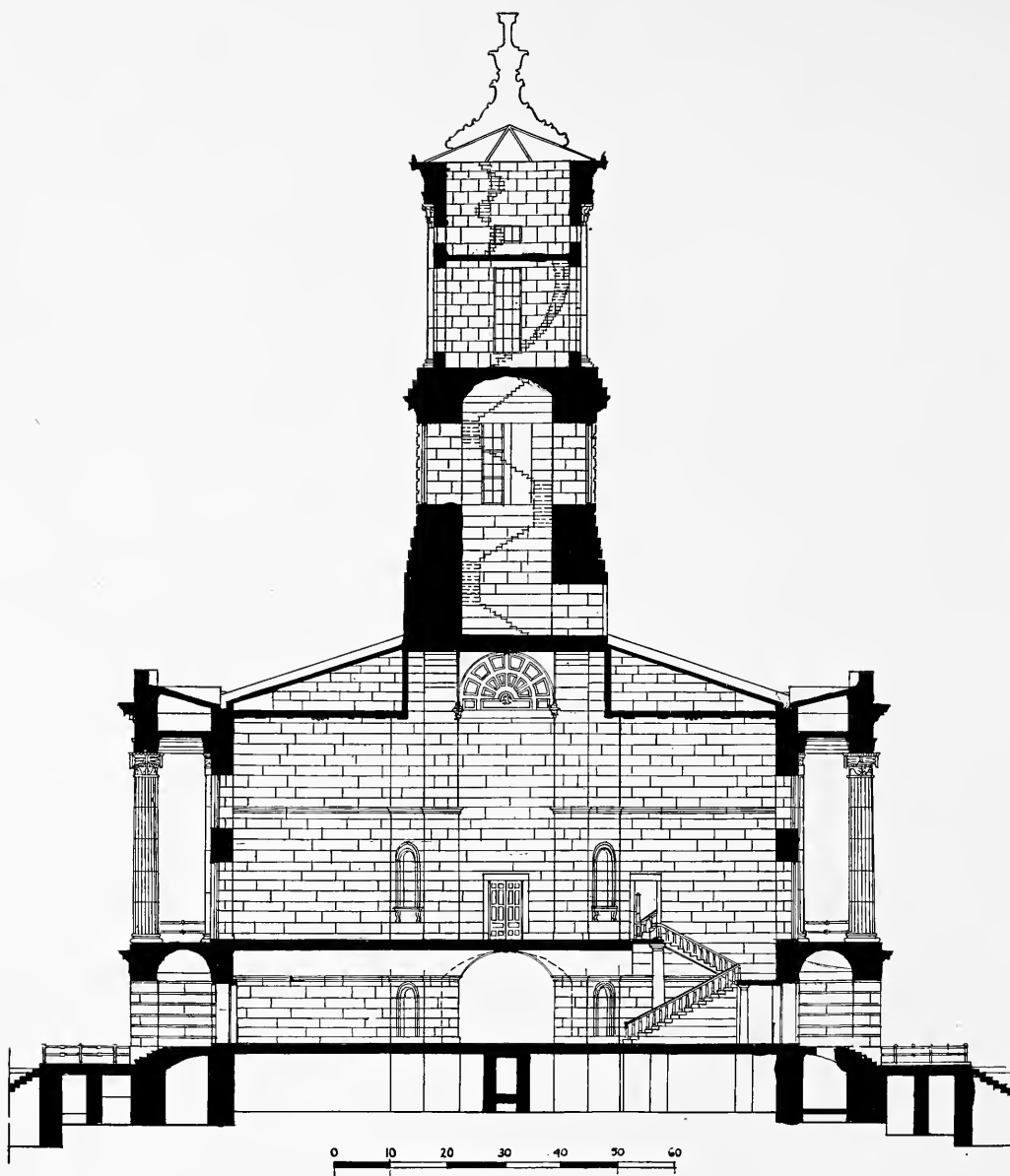
TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County.



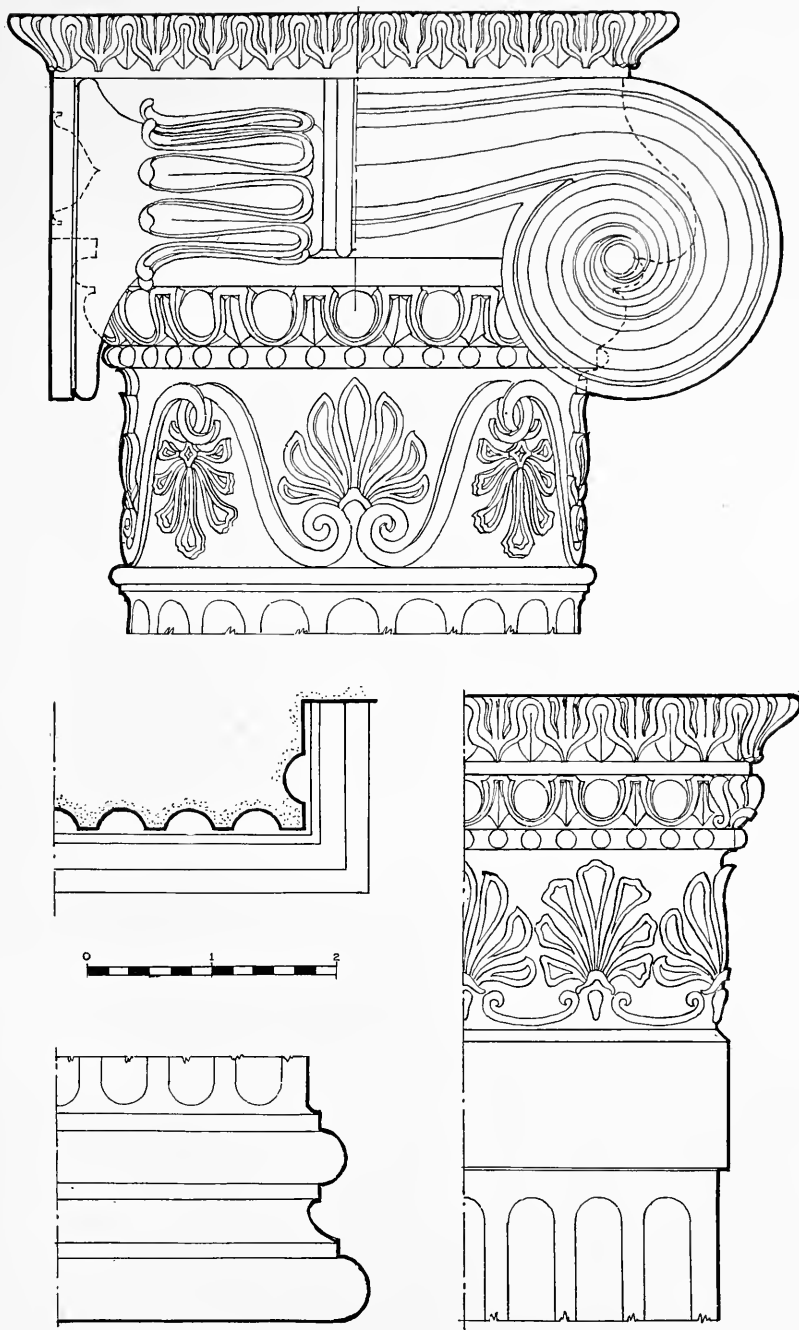


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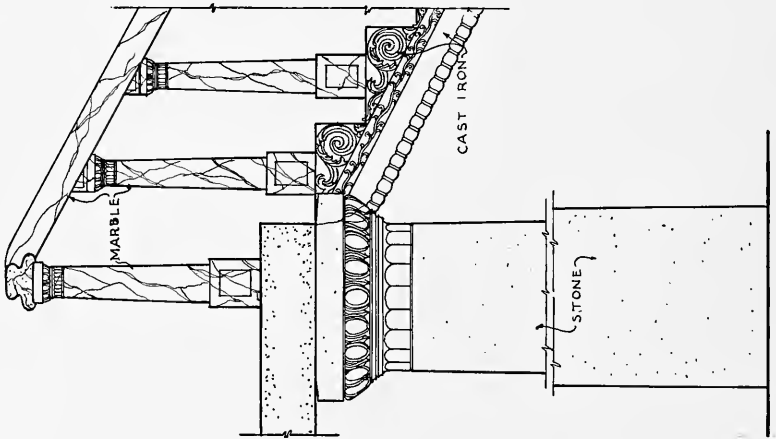
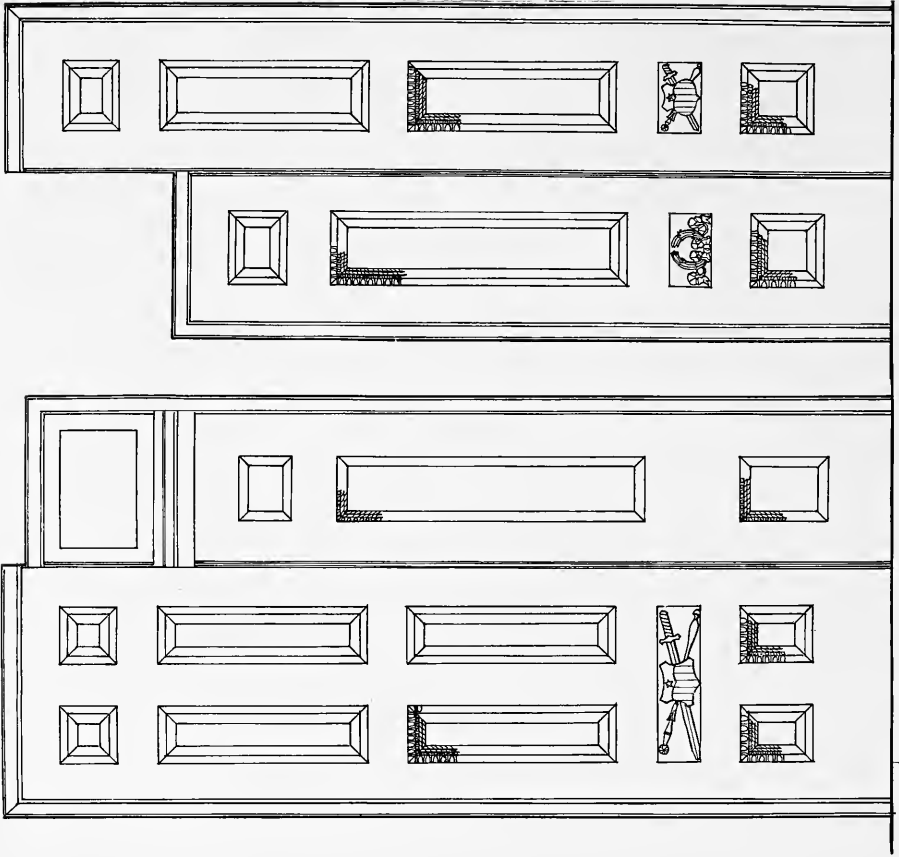
TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County, West Elevation.



TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County. Cross Section.



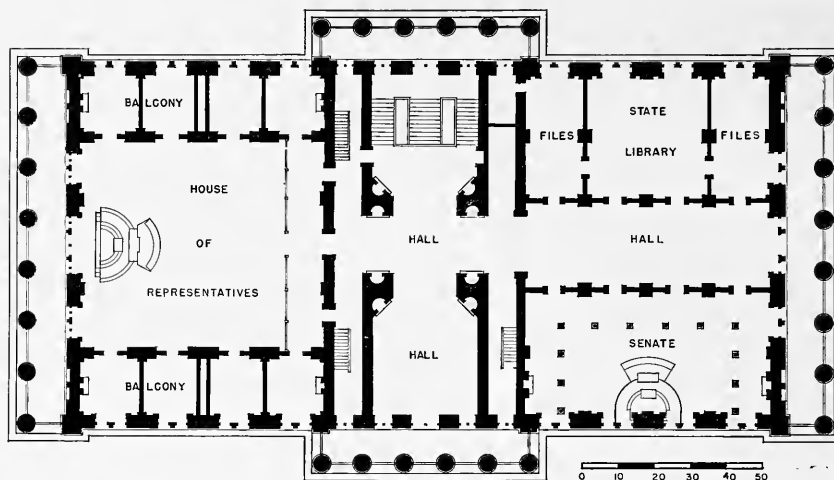
TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County. Details of Exterior Order.



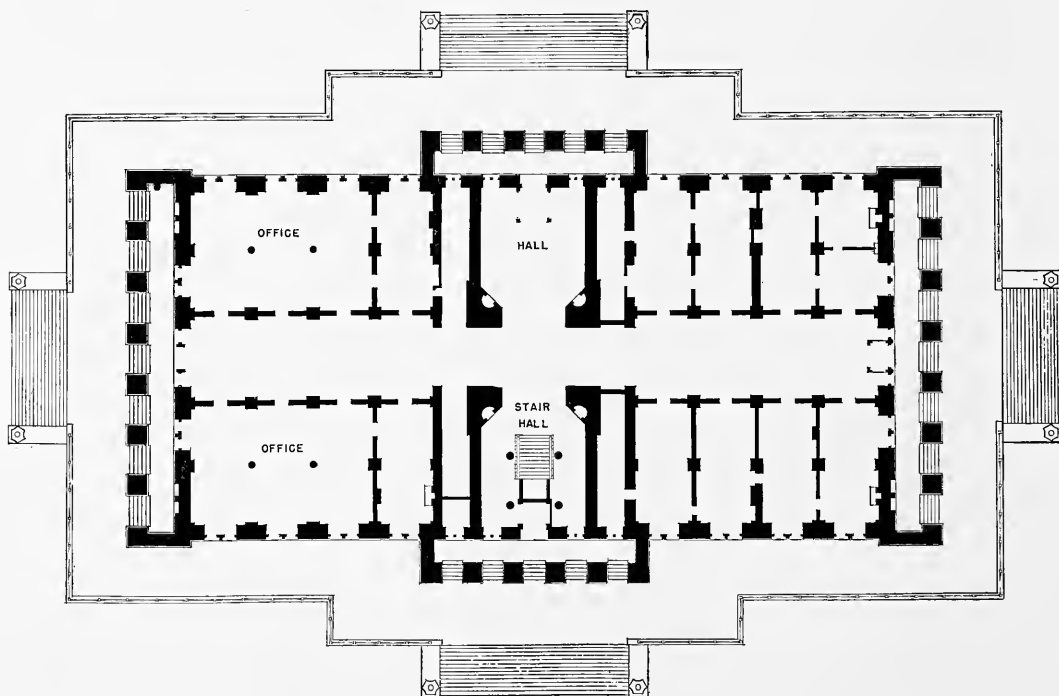
TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County. Interior Details.



TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County. First Floor Hall.



Second Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County.



TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County. Stair.



TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County. Second Floor Hall.





TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County. The State Library.



TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County. The House of Representatives.



TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County. The Senate Chamber.



TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL, Nashville, Davidson County. Exterior Order.



RIVERWOOD, Nashville, Davidson County, Built by Alexander James Porter, *Ca.* 1800. Remodeled by Wm. Strickland, *Ca.* 1850.



ST. MARY'S CHURCH, Nashville, Davidson County. Now remodeled. From an old photograph.



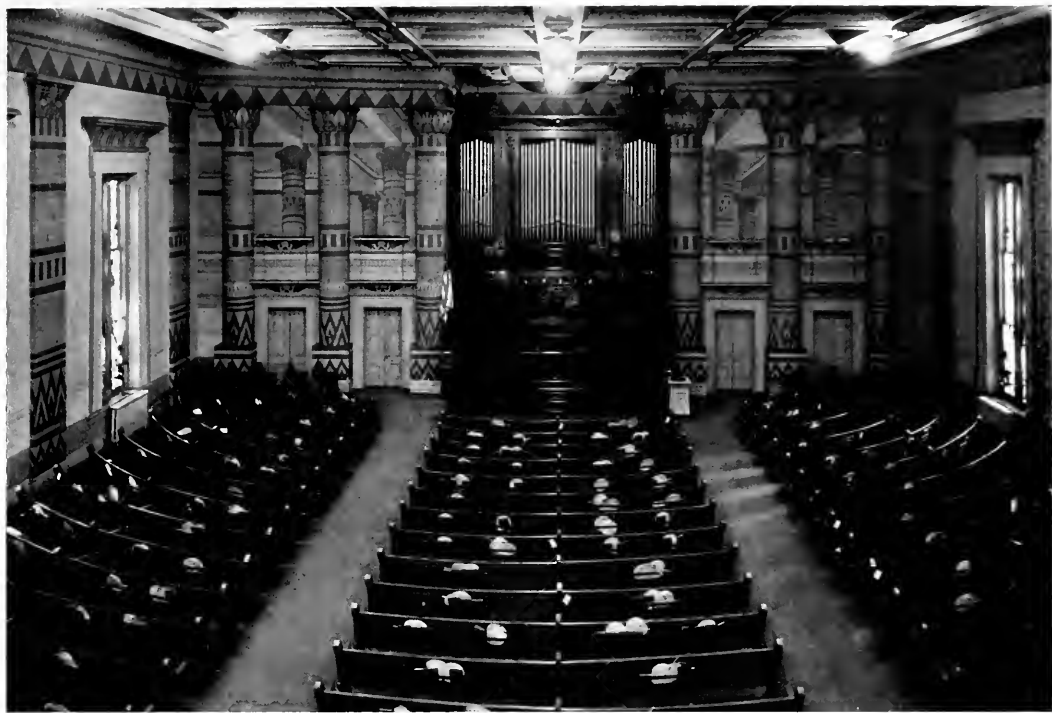


OLD DAVIDSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE. Nashville, Davidson County. Now torn down. From an old photograph.



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Nashville, Davidson County. 1848.





THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Nashville, Davidson County. Interior.



Front Door

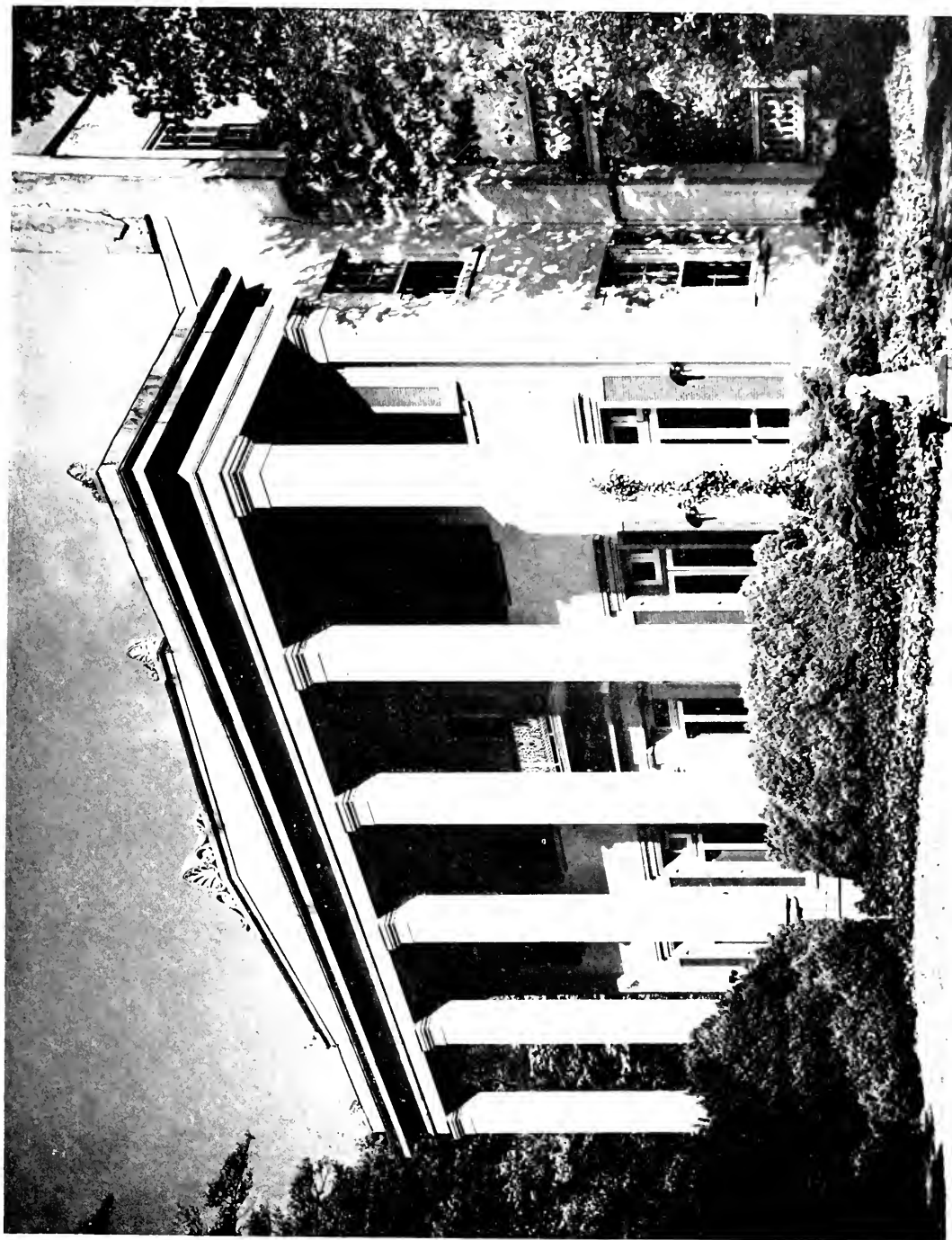
## BELLE MEADE

*Nashville, Davidson County*

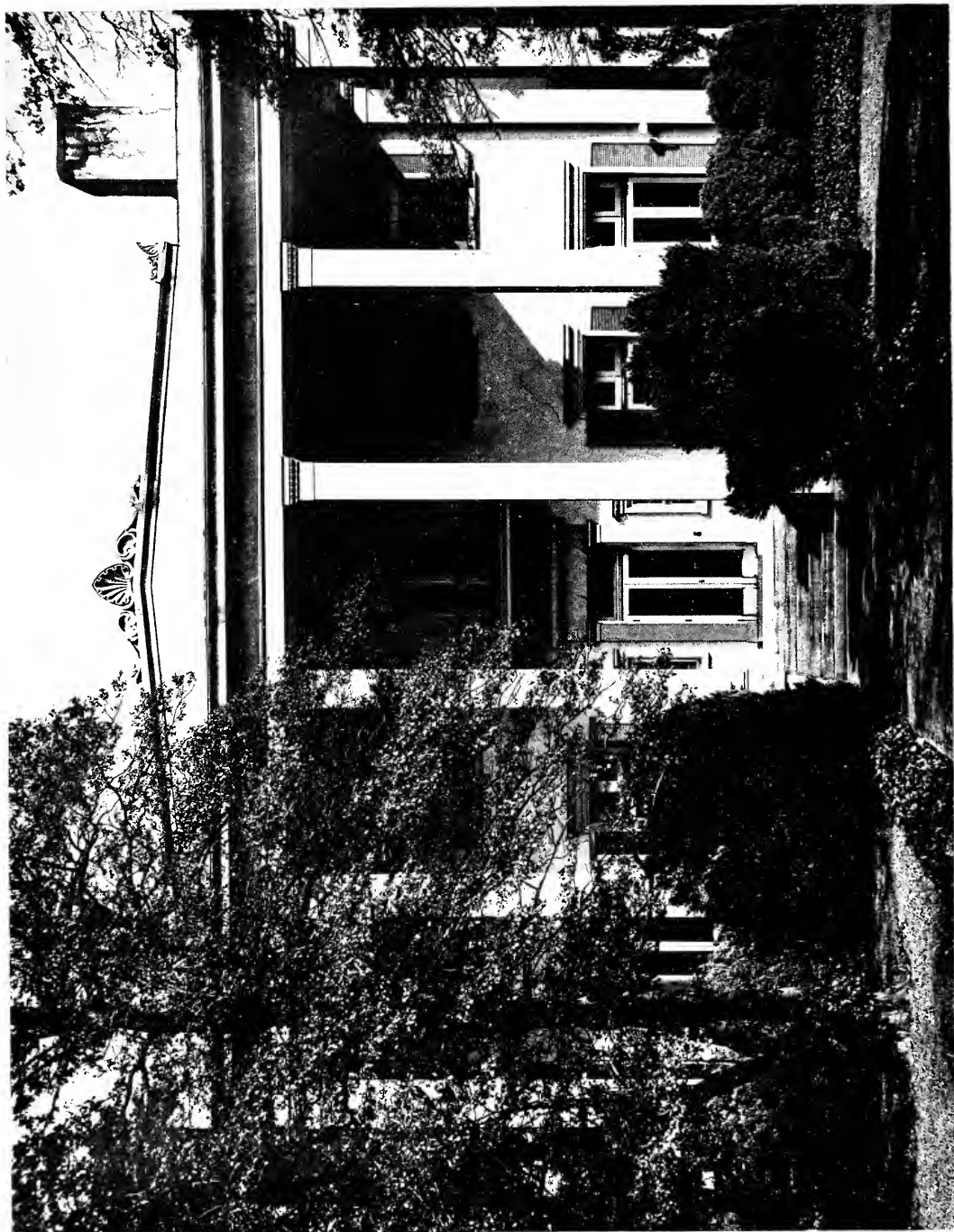
The exact date of the original building is unknown. It was probably built about 1810 by Giles Harding. In 1853 the original house was seriously damaged by fire and William Strickland was retained to restore it. He added the front portico of six slender duolithic piers surmounted by a low parapet with richly carved finials. This portico stands on a stone terrace raised four feet above ground level.

The house itself is of stucco on brick. The outer walls are eighteen inches thick, the inner walls, twelve. The portico is of Tennessee limestone which has mellowed beautifully with time. The ceiling heights of the first and second floors are respectively fifteen feet and fourteen feet.

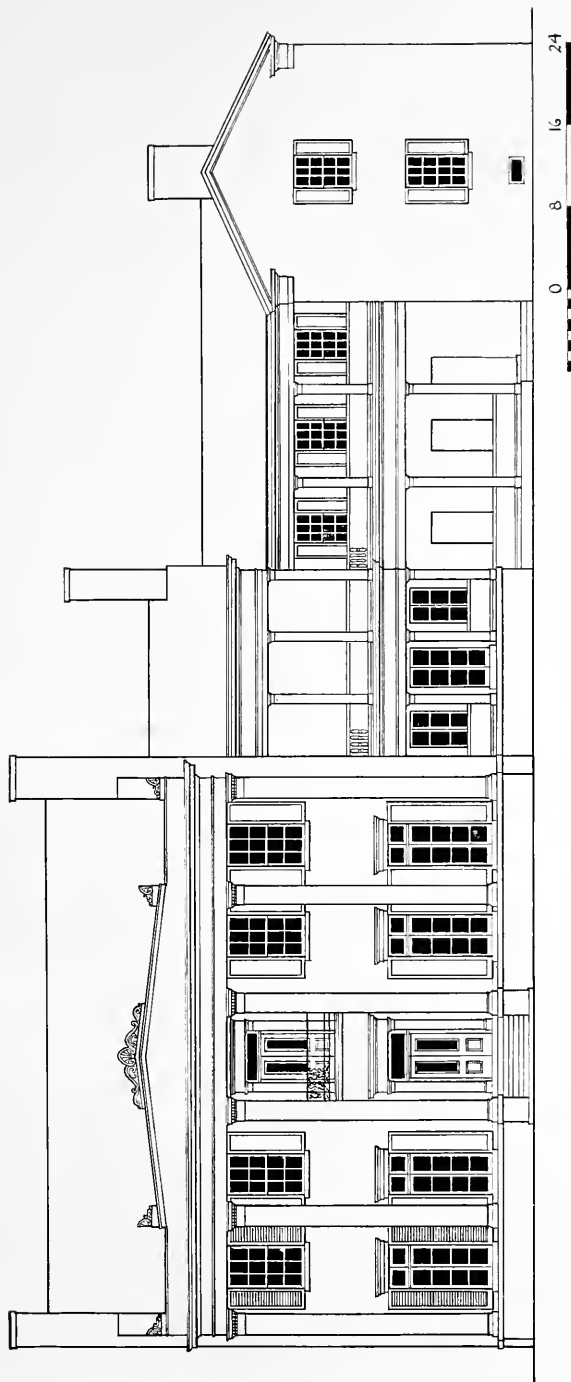
An interesting detail of the exterior is the design of the cast-iron balcony over the entrance which is almost identical with that used in the ornamental ironwork at *Belmont*. The design for the railings which serve as guards to the windows, and between the porch piers, are an adaptation in wood and iron of those on the Petit Trianon at Versailles.



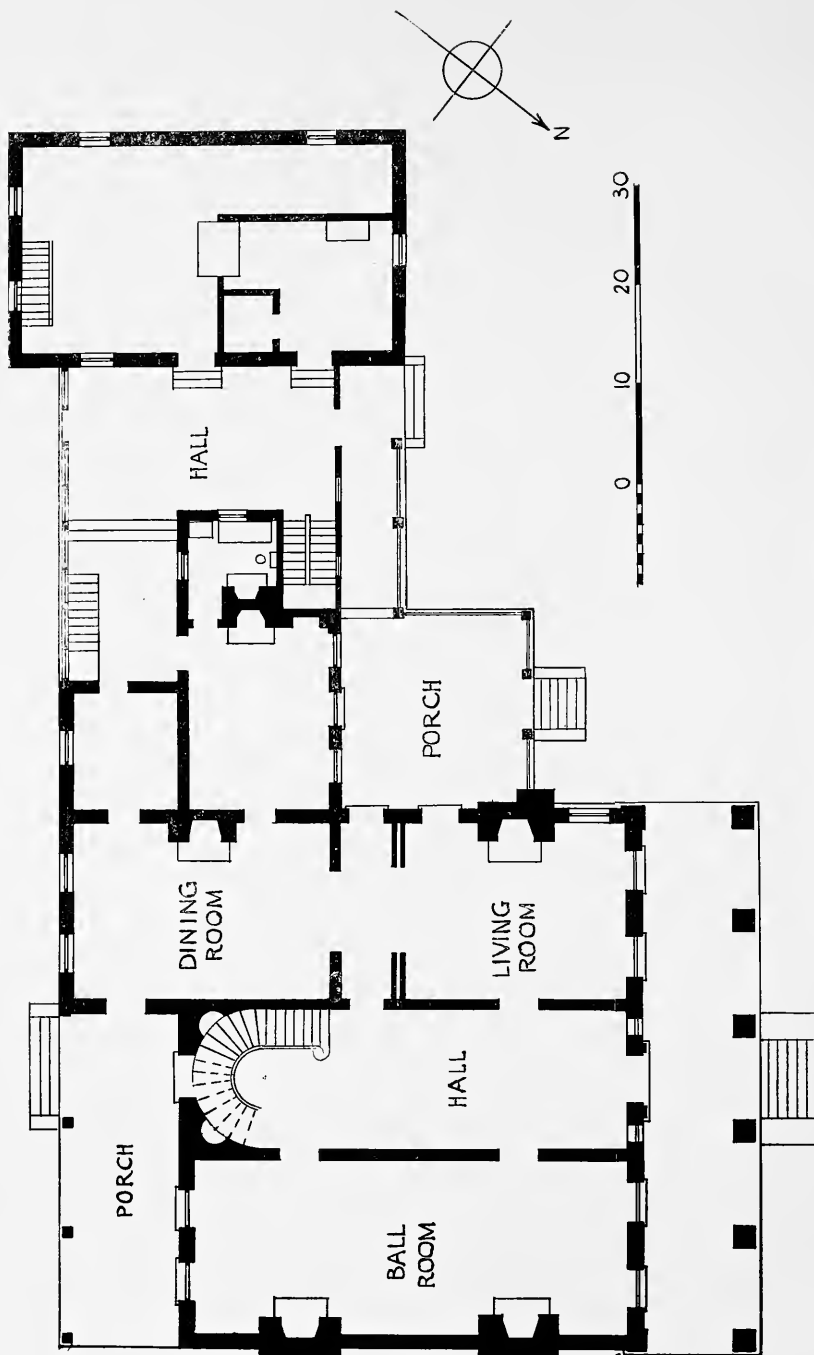
BILL MEACHAM, NASHVILLE, DAVIDSON COUNTY. WEST FRONT.



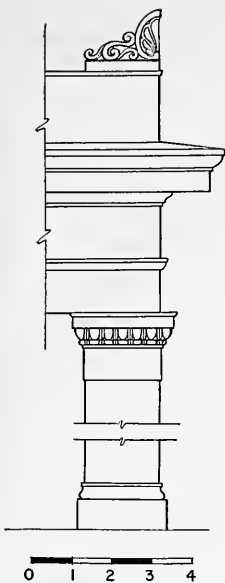
BELL MEADE, Nashville, Davidson County. West Front.



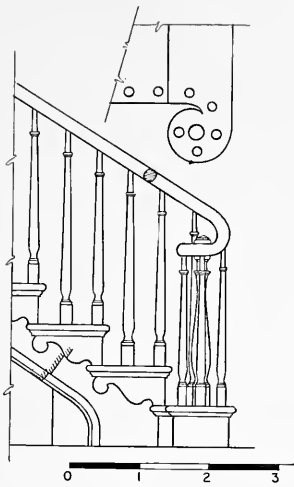
BELLE MEADE, Nashville, Davidson County. West Front.



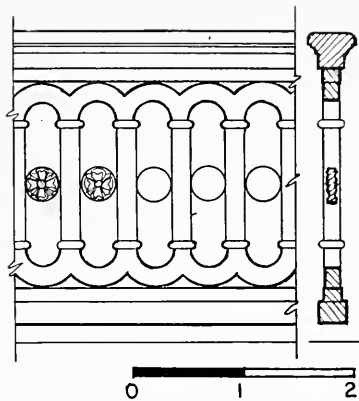
BELLE MEADE, Nashville, Davidson County. First Floor Plan



Portico



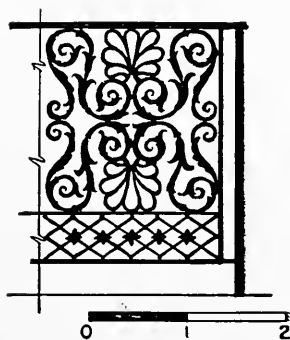
Stair



Porch Railing

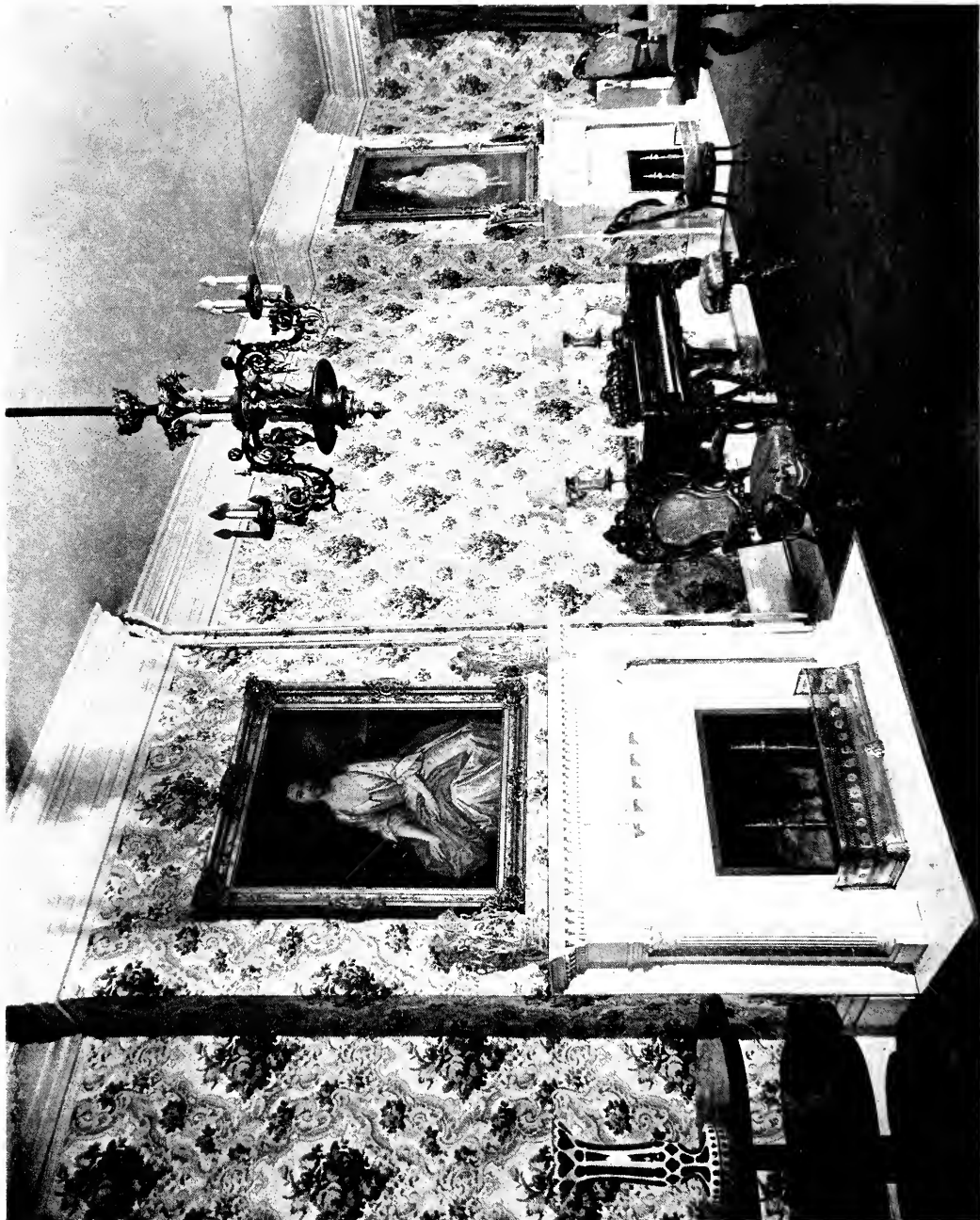


North Front



Balcony Railing

BELLE MEADE, Nashville, Davidson County.



BELLE MEADE, Nashville, Davidson County. The Ball Room.





Summer House



Iron Work

## BELMONT

*Nashville, Davidson County*

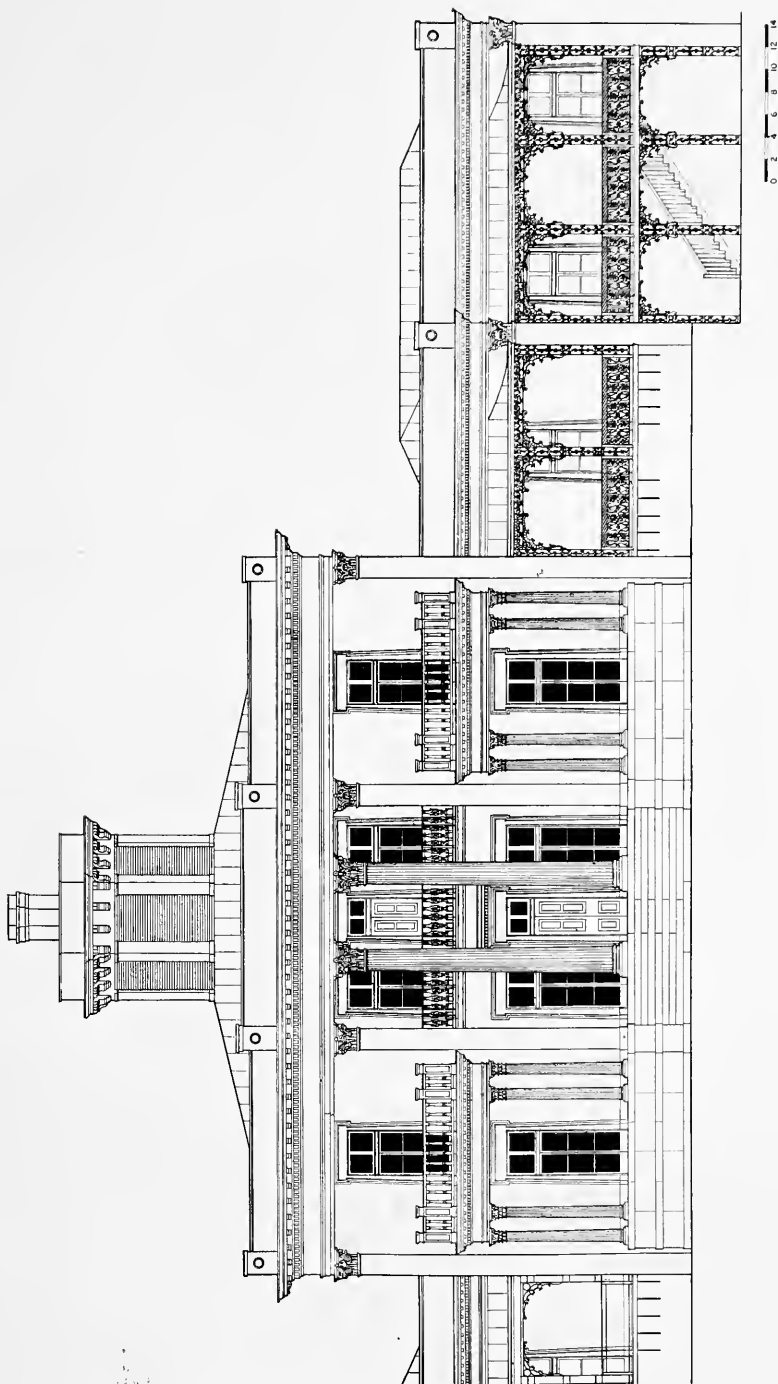
BELMONT was built for Mrs. J. A. S. Acklen in 1850. The design is almost certainly by William Strickland. It is possible that the smaller porticos on either side of the main entrance were added at a slightly later date, a hypothesis which is borne out by a certain lack of unity of the design of the interior where the classical style finds itself in juxtaposition to the Italian bracketed style. The exterior is stuccoed brick. Columns and capitals are of wood.

The central block is crowned by a cupola which conceals a chimney, serving as a vent for all the fireplaces in the main block of the house. It is reached by the ingenious, narrow double flying stairway.

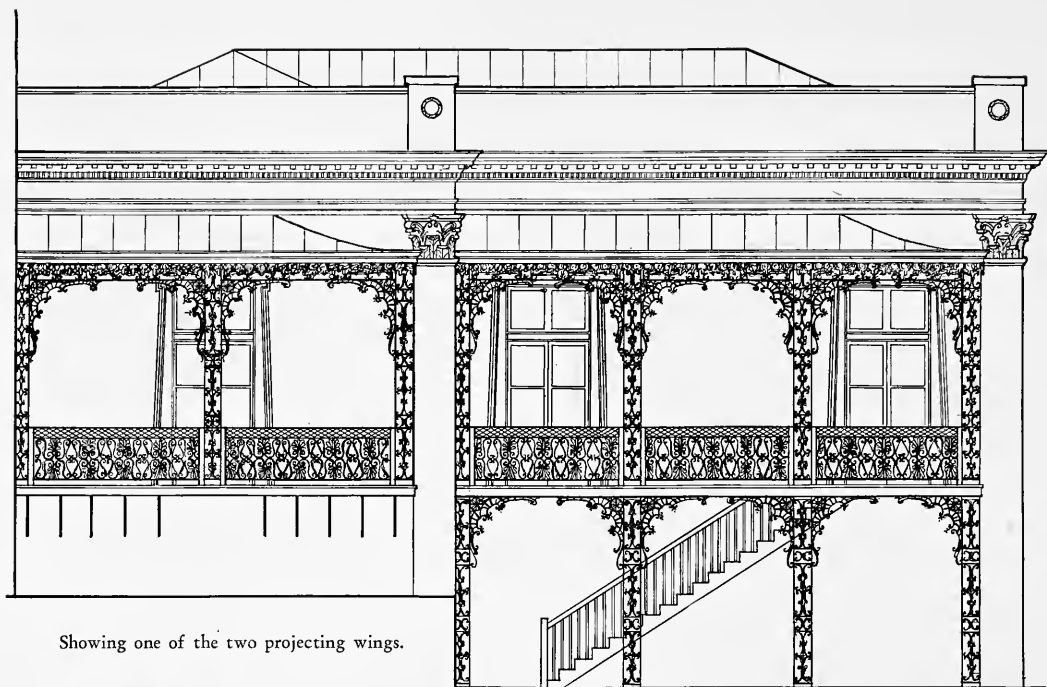
The effect of BELMONT is somewhat impaired by being incorporated into a mass of adjoining buildings of Ward-Belmont Academy, though this has been intelligently handled.



BELMONT, Nashville, Davidson County, Central Bay.



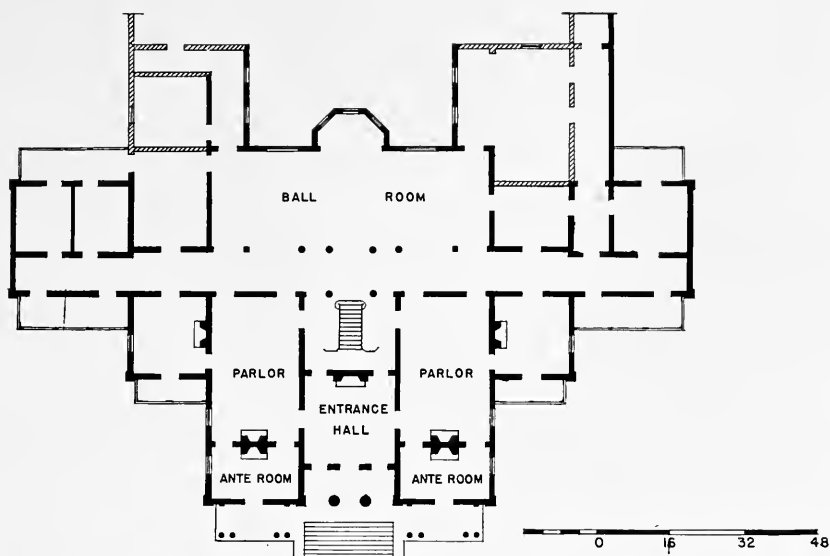
BELMONT, Nashville, Davidson County. Portion of South Front.



Showing one of the two projecting wings.



BELMONT. West Wing.



Ball Room



Stair

BELMONT, Nashville, Davidson County.

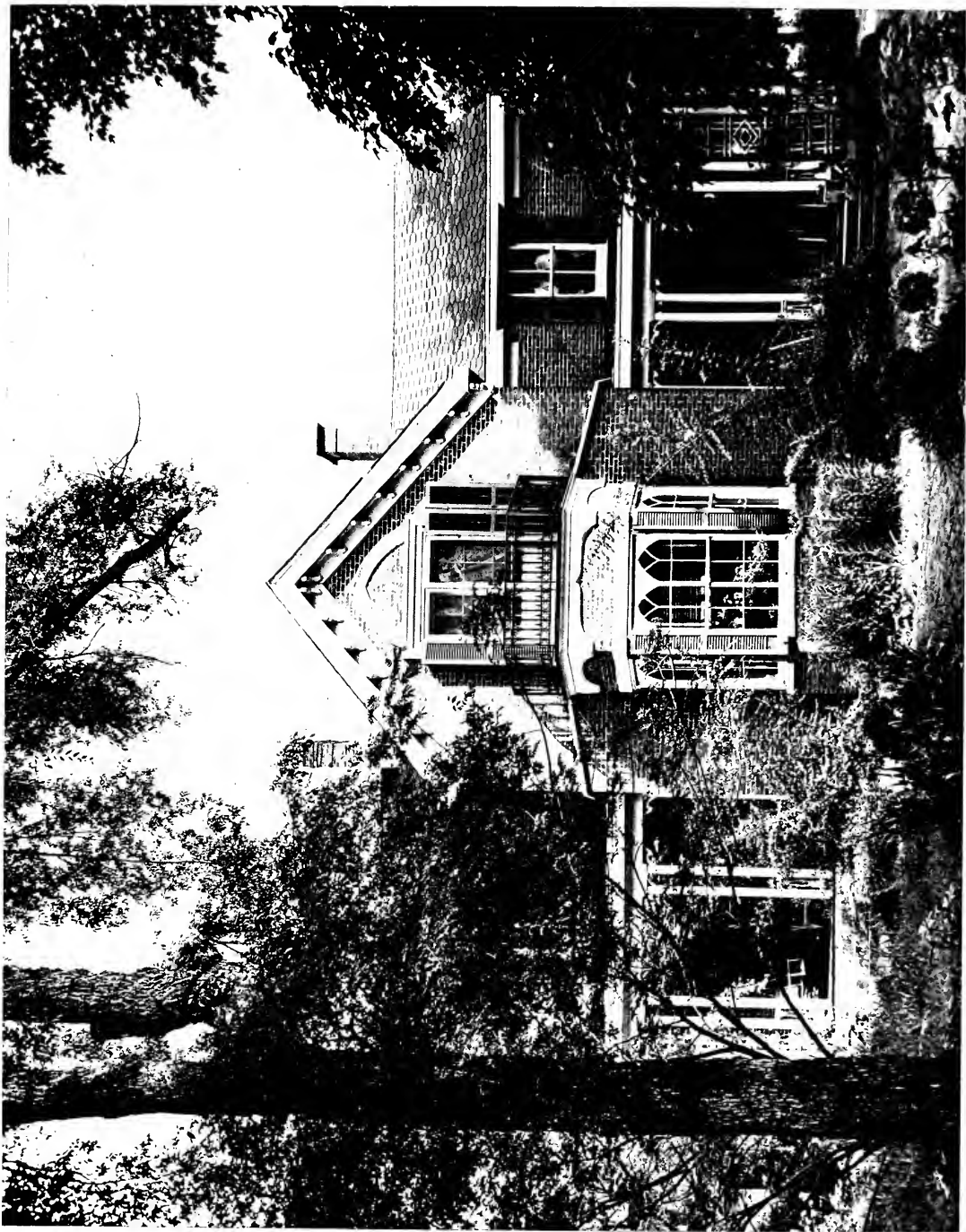


1850-1860



FAIRVIEW, Jefferson City, Jefferson County. Built by Stokely Donaldson Williams. Ca. 1850.





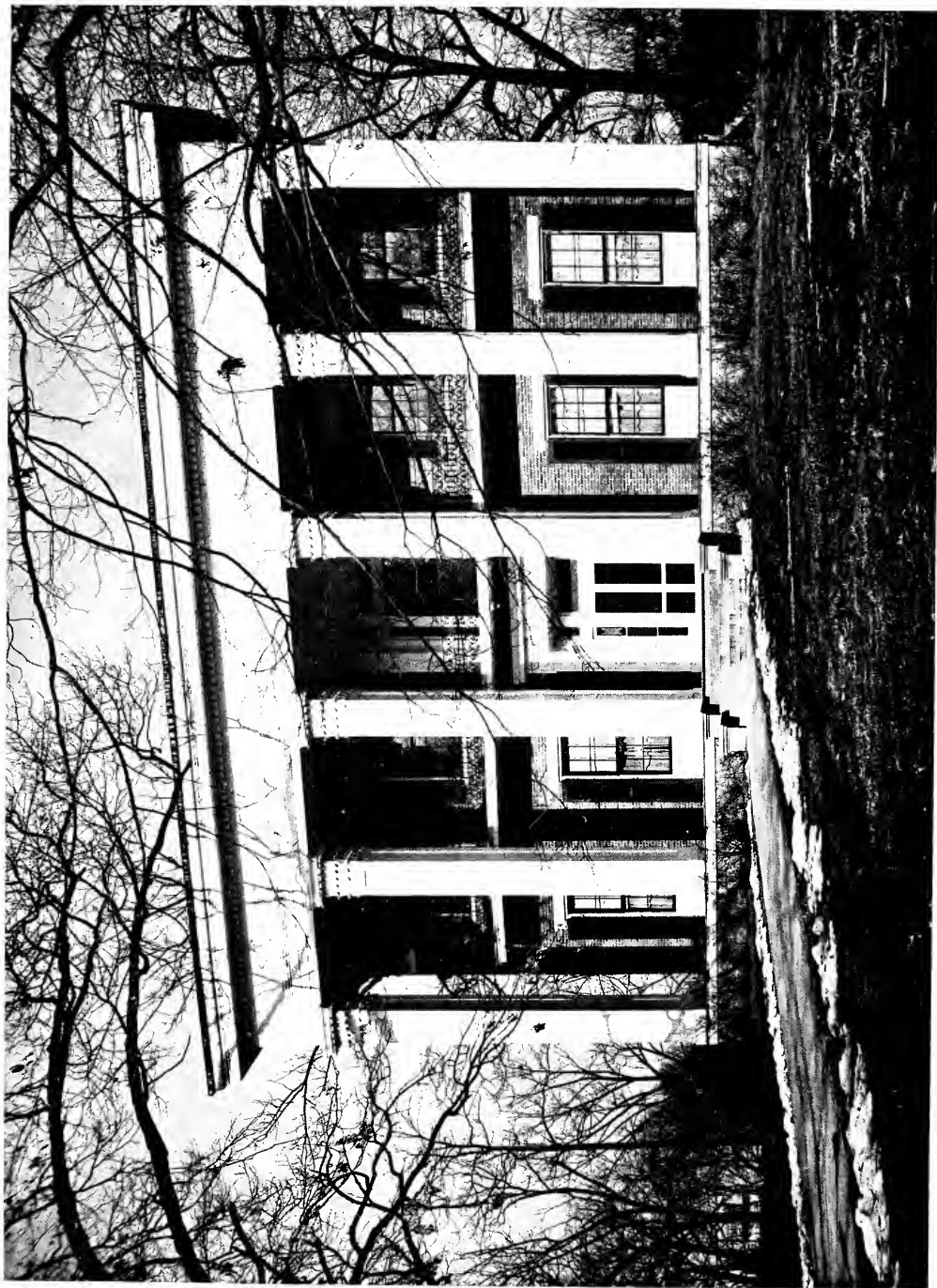
OAKLEY, Gallatin, Summer County. Built by Dr. John Franklin. 1852.



BEECHLAWN, Columbia, Maury County. Built by Major A. W. Warfield. 1853.



THE CHEAIRS HOUSE, Spring Hill, Maury County. Built by Major Nathaniel Francis Cheairs. 1855.



THE GEORGE THOMAS LEWIS HOUSE, Clarksville, Montgomery County. Original date unknown. Remodeled Ca. 1850.



THE SMITH HOUSE, Clarksville, Montgomery County. *Ca.* 1850.



CAST IRON PORCH,  
Murfreesboro, Rutherford County.





HAZEL PATH, Hendersonville, Sumner County. 1857.



MARYMONT, Murfreesboro, Rutherford County. Built by Nimrod Jenkins. *Ca. 1859.*



Exterior Detail

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